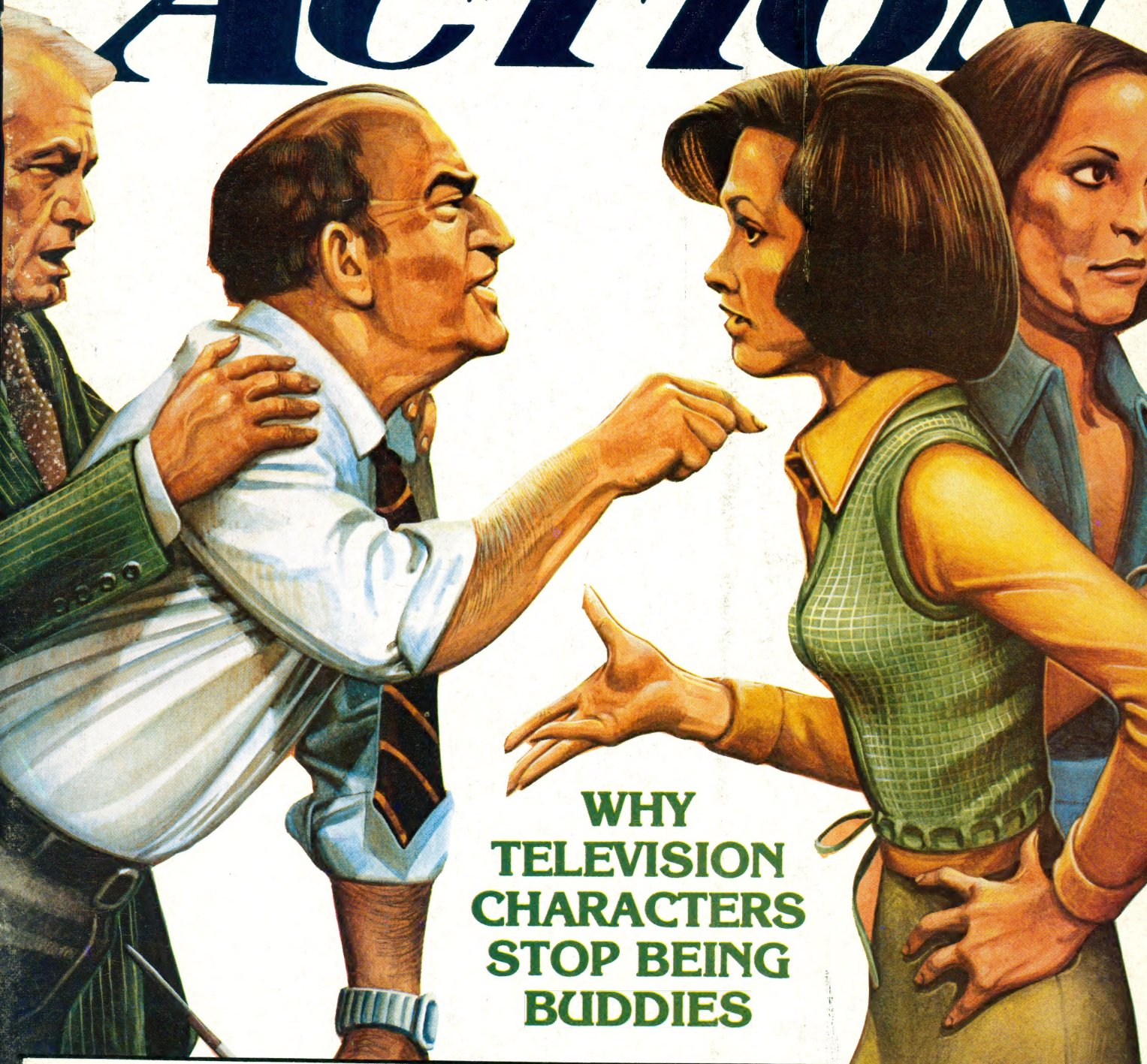


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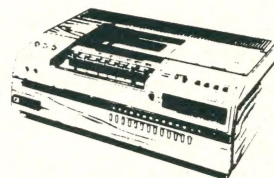
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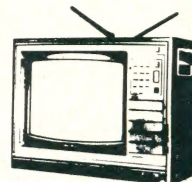
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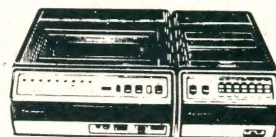
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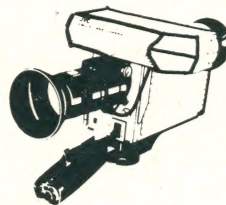
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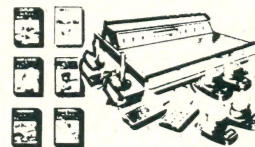
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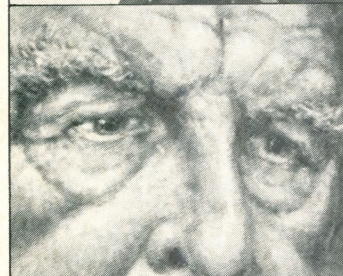
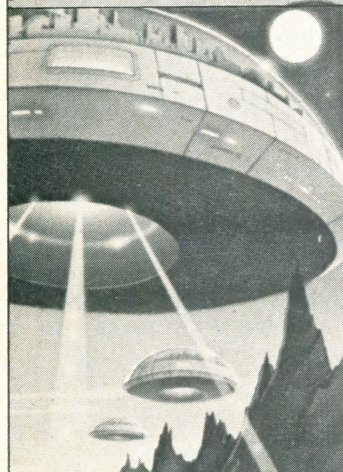
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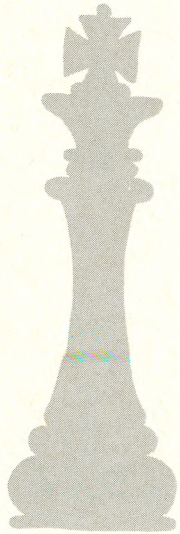
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VIDEO ACTION, JANUARY, 1981, VOL. 1, NO. 2, PUBLISHED MONTHLY BY VIDEO ACTION, INC., 21 W. ELM ST., CHICAGO, ILL. 60610. APPLICATION TO MAIL AT CONTROLLED CIRCULATION POSTAGE RATES IS PENDING AT DENVER, COLORADO. POSTMASTER: SEND FORM 3579 TO VIDEO ACTION MAGAZINE, P.O. BOX 255, MOUNT MORRIS, ILL. 61054. SUBSCRIPTIONS: IN THE U.S. \$17.00 PER YEAR; CANADIAN, \$19.25 PER YEAR; FOREIGN, \$25.00 PER YEAR. PRINTED IN USA.

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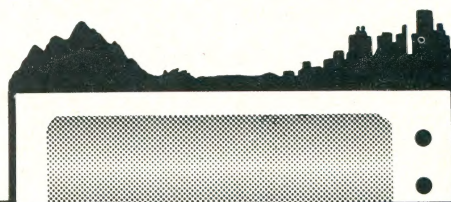
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ONE OF THE PROBLEMS WE encounter in producing *Video Action* is "lead time:" the amount of time between the deadline and the on-sale date. 8:00 *Central Time* has the earliest deadline in the issue, presumably under the theory "if the editor can't get his act together, there is no reason why anyone else should either." I am writing these words in early August; this issue is due to hit the newsstands in mid-November.

So I do not really know if *Speak Up America* is still polluting the airwaves. NBC just premiered the series as its first program of the new season—a season that is expected to begin about six weeks later, various strikes notwithstanding.

Speaking out against *Speak Up* has become a cause celebre. A great many newspaper critics—and more than a handful of NBC affiliates—share this sentiment.

For those who have not seen the program, *Speak Up America* is sort of a cross between *Real People* and *Let's Make A Deal*: film crews run all across the nation asking people for their opinions concerning important issues, and these segments are edited together in a topical manner and broadcast in prime-time on NBC. What could be bad about that? It is about time the Common Folk had their say.

Too true. But *Speak Up America* bastardizes their—our—opinions by presenting them in a cheap and tawdry manner. Hosted by former child evangelist Marjoe Gortner, various segments are introduced by one semi-celebrity or another: a segment of opinions concerning America's boycott of the Summer Olympics was introduced by the coach of the U.S. Olympic Hockey Team, the man whose boys recently defeated the Russians in the Winter Olympics.

The problem is not in the opinions but in the manner in which they are presented. The show is straight out of the Sybil-The-Soothsayer scenes from the movie *Network* (indeed, *Speak Up America* makes *Network* look remarkably prophetic); the segments are presented to a live studio audience who are encouraged to cheer and boo the people who are speaking up.

The whole show takes on the air of Lions versus Christians.

Not being a news program, the segments are not balanced: an exposition of the test-tube baby story in the program's pilot focused in on the *Brave New World* angle without exploring the positive aspects in any detail. Of course, the studio audience loudly boo-ed those people who were speaking up in favor of the process.

What is shocking about *Speak Up America* is that the two men who are most responsible for the program are geniuses: George Schlatter, producer of *Laugh-In* and *Real People*, and writer/actor Bill Dana (Jose Jimenez and the old *Steve Allen Show*), both of whom have added significantly to the television medium. I guess we all make mistakes.

This concept deserves better. It should be a daily feature on an expanded network news show. It should be handled in an honest and straightforward manner.

I do not suggest this show be banned from the airwaves—I believe in the First Amendment and I think such protection extends to shows I find disgusting.

But, outside of David Brinkley stealing the tapes, I sure hope *Speak Up America* fails on its own.

—Mike Gold,
Editor

(VIDEO ACTION invites you to speak up, too, about this issue, about the state of television, cable, video tape and discs. Address your letters to Editor, Video Action, 21 W. Elm Street, Chicago, IL 60610. Our letters page will begin next issue.)

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418. PASSION PARLOR. COLOR XXX Rated. A visit to "Happiness Unlimited" run by kindly Dr. Ogden who tries to help beautiful young ladies lose their inhibitions. 55 minutes
BETA 2: \$49.95 VHS: \$52.95

539. PLAY ONLY WITH ME. COLOR XXX Rated. Beautiful bodies, interracial sex and hand-cuffed bondage. A fine combination. 54 minutes
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538. DIARY OF A NYMPH. COLOR XXX Rated. This girl can't get enough of anything! Boys, girls, next door neighbors, herself. 59 minutes
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402. VOLUPTUOUS VERA. COLOR XXX Rated. Vera is a very explicit, very horny young teenager who knows what she wants and how she wants it. 57 minutes
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403. SEX AS YOU LIKE IT. COLOR XXX Rated. "Your Pleasure is Our Business" Whatever turns the customer on is delivered on schedule. 56 minutes
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498. A STAR IS BORN. COLOR XXX Rated. San Cohen, noted Hollywood producer, and his "money man" J.B. Goldstein are both trying to "turn on" the somewhat "different" son of J.B. 58 minutes
BETA 2: \$49.95 VHS: \$52.95

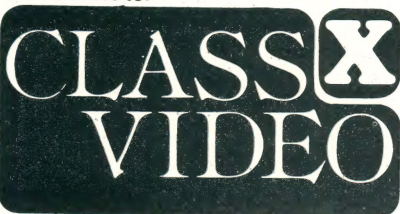
404. BIRTHDAY BABE. COLOR XXX Rated. The ultimate birthday gift—a young, beautiful lady and very eager to please! And all wrapped up in her own birthday suit. 58 minutes
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401. NAUGHTY NOSTALGIA #1 (c. 1923-USA). Two genuine xxx rated pornographic films from the early 20's (judging by the cars and clothes). A historical curiosity, amusing and arousing. "MIXED RELATIONS" and "BOB'S HOT STORY". Silent films with music score, correct projection speed. 31 minutes total
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535. NAUGHTY NOSTALGIA #2 (c. late 30's, early 40's-USA). Silent films: "The Baby Sitter", "The Opium Den", "A Day in the Country". 42 minutes total
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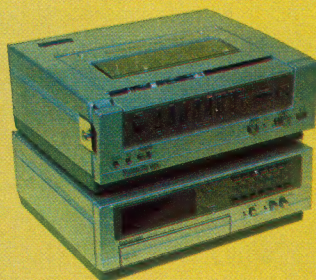


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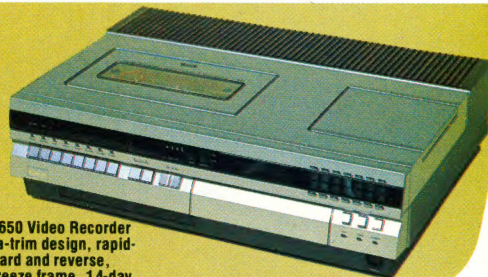
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VCRs

Buy Japanese

While most people seem to be buying American when it comes to videocassette recorders, many Japanese companies are making inroads into the VCR marketplace.

Hitachi, which sold 80,000 VCRs between September of 1979 and last March, has upped that number by producing 200,000 units by the beginning of fall. By March of 1981, they expect to have an additional 350,000 recorders rolling off the assembly lines.

Sanyo will nearly double its production output to 50,000 units a month, an almost three-fold increase in VCRs since last year. Matsushita plans to sink a staggering \$230,000,000 into the production of VCRs and semiconductors.

Sales of recorders in the United States alone currently stand at approximately 393,000 Japanese-produced units a year and that number continues to grow. The rest of that country's 3.1 million VCRs produced last year are hardly gathering dust—indeed they are selling like proverbial hotcakes all over the world. West Germany accounts for 232,041 units, while the Common Market countries sales have nearly tripled since the year before—up to some 119,000 recorders.

Surprisingly, some of Japan's fastest growing accounts are in Middle Eastern countries, who buy 14.4 per cent of the Japanese output—Kuwait imported almost 50,000 units and the United Arab Emirates took in over 28,000.

Of course, the "guts" of nearly every "American" VCR sold in the past five years were manufactured by Japanese companies.

Funai ... It Doesn't Look VCR-ish

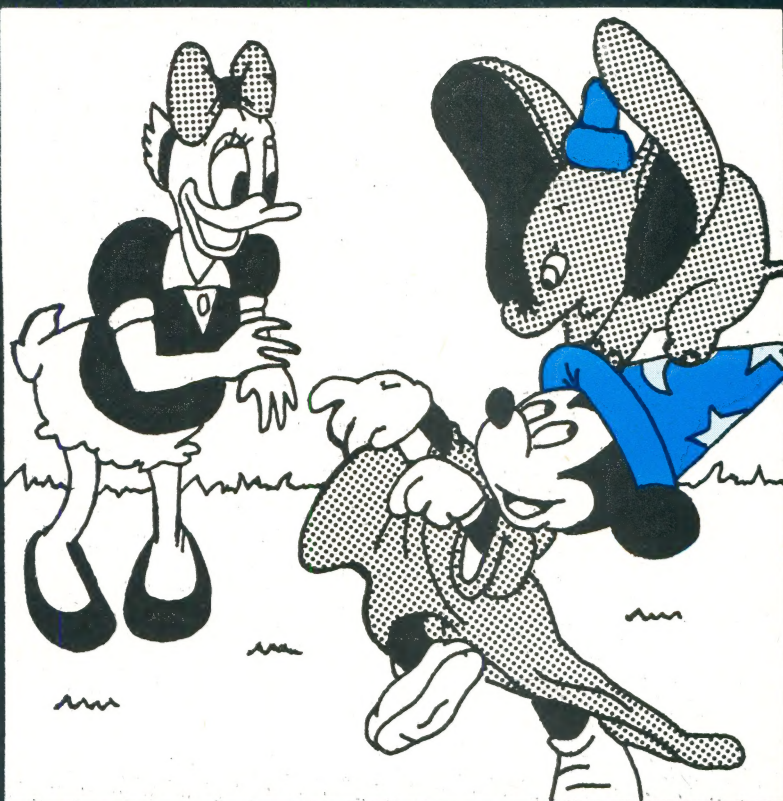
Not all that many years ago the home videocassette recorder was little more than a gleam in the eyes of video fanatics all over. Some dreams came true with the advent of consumer priced VCRs—but it was not enough. Sure, the new VCR owner could tape his favorite programs from the tube and watch all the movies he could want, but for home movies Super-8 was still the only alternative. VCRs were just too

heavy to make outdoor use practical.

Now Super-8 is going to get a run for its money, thanks to a new VCR system recently introduced by Funai. Instead of 20 or more pounds of video equipment to lug around, the Funai VCR is very portable indeed, weighing in at a mere seven pounds—and that includes the battery pack. Another new and different feature is the system's 1/4" tape in a cassette about the size of a standard audio cassette. Selling for \$8.95, the Funai cassette gives a 30 minute recording capacity. The com-

laurels. They intend to continue working on their mini-VCR, with plans calling for the development of a camera-recorder-playback unit by late 1981. Until then, it can be used with a standard video camera. The battery will give you up to 40 minutes worth of recording or 80 minutes of playback on a single charge. The Funai VCR also offers such special features as still frame, variable speed advance, memory counter and drop-out compensator.

No word yet on how the picture quality compares to the 1/2" models.



pany plans on marketing a 60 minute tape sometime in 1981.

Several other companies have been working on developing lightweight, 1/4" tape systems for a few years but some, like BASF and Toshiba, were forced to drop plans because their recorders could not be retailed at a price competitive with other VCR formats. Funai had no such problem with their machine. It sells for under \$1,000.

Funai will not be resting on their

A Real Mickey Mouse Outfit

Walt Disney Productions, after testing the waters earlier this year, has joined the rest of the major Hollywood film studios in marketing their movies on videocassettes. U.S. Video, which also dubs for Paramount Pictures on the West Coast, will be handling that chore for WDP, while S.T. Video will do the honors back East. All of Disney's mice, ducks and black holes will be available this fall.

Beta Than Ever

Tape is big business these days and, as more and more people buy the various and sundry VCRs on the market, it becomes even bigger. Scotch—3M's tape division, from cellophane to audio to video—has announced a new two-and-one-half hour videocassette, the L-625, made specially for the likewise growing number of duplicators of pre-recorded movies. The Beta-format cassette, available only to duplicators, uses a new thin-base tape developed by 3M for this system that is identical in performance to the consumer marketed L-500 two-hour tape but runs 30 minutes longer.

Strange Bedfellows

With all the ballyhoo going on over the ratings war between ABC, CBS and NBC, one would think that the networks would not even be on speaking terms, let alone negotiating with one another to form various business partnerships. But that is exactly what is happening these days thanks to the ever-growing field of home video.

ABC Video Enterprises is expected to reach an agreement soon with CBS Video Enterprises to have the latter distribute the former's line of videocassettes and disks via CBS Video's mammoth distribution system. And NBC is not one to be left out of a good—albeit unusual—thing. The RCA Corporation, the NBC television network's parent company, has already signed a deal with ABC Video wherein ABC will supply RCA's home video division with programming for their cassettes and disks. And CBS already presses RCA's video disks!

Just think, it took a little \$1,000 videocassette recorder to do what nothing could ever do before—it brought the Big Three together.

Playing The Percentages

A recent survey of electronics retailers who carry pre-recorded videocassettes found that 22 per cent rent cassettes while 29 per cent have exchange programs. The majority—80 per cent—special-order tapes for customers and 88 per cent said they plan to expand their stock and involvement in video. The number of pre-recorded videocassettes kept in stock ranged from 350 to 2,000. While blank tapes remain the largest-selling accessories, movies, sporting events and children's shows sold well in the past year.

And the market is barely two years old.

In This War, The Allied Lost

The first major business failure in the video industry has occurred. Allied Artists Video has folded. Lorimar Productions, which bought Allied Artists Movies lock-stock-and-barrel at the beginning of the year plans to sell off the video arm of its acquisition soon. This involves the rights to over 500 titles owned by Allied Artists for the cassette/disc market.

Lorimar had been expected to give AAV new financial life but decided to remain on the periphery of the home video market by remaining as a contributor to such pay-tv services as Premiere and Rainbow Programming.



Porn To Be Wild

Let's face it—a lot of people enjoy watching dirty movies. And thanks to VCRs and cable television, the day of the sleazy porno theater and 8mm dirty movie watched furtively on a sheet hung in the garage is nearly gone. Tapes of porno films are among the biggest and most consistent sellers in the vast home video market.

And X-rated adult entertainment can now come into your home on your television set, of all places. In fact, porno is becoming quite the hot item on various cable and pay television systems nationwide. Los Angeles' subscription channel, On-TV has purchased a package of adult films from the Quality Cable Network (QCN), which has also secured rights to distribute one of the premiere cable porn programs, *Screw Magazine's Midnight Blue* which originated on a public access channel in New York. In addition, QCN is currently at work on special programming for cable systems interested in adding adult channels to their line-ups.

The "blue" wave is also rolling across the East Coast, most notably with Satori Productions Private

Screenings, which will be available to discriminating—not to mention consenting—adults on Bayshore Cablevision in suburban New York. Even staid and stately Boston will be getting their share of porno on its pay television station.

So toss out your overcoat! Porno has come home to roost.

Prorating The Ratings

The movies you see on cable television or buy on prerecorded cassettes and discs are not always exactly as you would have seen them had you visited your local theater, and certain aspects of that bothers the Motion Picture Association.

The MPA, through their offices of Classification and Ratings Administration (CARA), are the folks who pre-screen films and decide which of the little letters you see at the start of every movie goes where—G, PG, R or X.

What is bothering them is the fact that movies seen on home video or pay television do not always carry the same rating given the film for its theatrical release. They think they should, but only if the movie can "conform identically to the version given its specified rating."

In a sort of "truth in ratings" move, the CARA wants any other version of a film, i.e. one that has been cut or edited for the video and/or disc market, to carry a notation to that affect.

VIDEO DISCS

Pioneers in the Field

Those of you who have been waiting on pins and needles to purchase the Pioneer laser/optical videodisc system, Laserdisc, won't have to wait much longer—if your name is on the waiting list.

By the time you read this the \$750 player will be in 20 new markets. Pioneer hopes to get a jump on rival RCA which is selling a disc system using a stylus rather than a laser to tap information from the disc.

RCA has confirmed its plans to add stereo sound to its Selectavision disc model in 1982. RCA, it appears, hopes the public will buy their product on the basis of the programming offered along with it. More extensive than Pioneer's at this time, the RCA library will include hundreds of movies and vintage television shows, documentaries and additional off-network programming. The Pioneer model offers better picture quality and the capacity for extensive informational storage

beyond its ability to provide standard entertainment.

The RCA model has already made inroads on Pioneer as far as distribution agreements are concerned. Sears and J.C. Penney's will begin selling the RCA units in late 1981. The Pioneer units, though on sale sooner, are being sold through electronics and video stores. No large chain to date has signed with Pioneer to carry Laserdisc.

CABLE

Qube Squared—Off Against ABC

Warner-Amex Cable's QUBE interactive cable system may be a technical and critical success, but that does not mean that all is well with the Columbus, Ohio, based outfit. Though they may be popular in the home, the courts are taking a slightly different view.

A U.S. District Court judge recently refused to grant a Warner-Amex petition that would have enjoined ABC-TV, the National Conference of Amateur Athletics (NCAA) and Ohio State University from broadcasting OSU football

games on the public airwaves. QUBE, it seems, has been "narrow-casting" Ohio State games since 1978 on a pay-per-play basis over cable and have come to consider them their own.

The court did not see it that way. The judge said Warner-Amex had failed to show that they would be irreparably harmed by ABC's broadcasting of the game. Indeed, the judge indicated that ABC might be the ones to experience "substantial harm" if he were to have found in the cable company's favor.

The ruling does not mean that Warner-Amex is giving up. While the fight is currently centered in Columbus, an adverse decision there could have more far-reaching consequences, particularly since Warner-Amex is beginning to operate QUBE systems in Houston, Pittsburgh and the Cincinnati suburbs. And while Columbus is a big football town—the Ohio State games are among QUBE's biggest money-makers—these new areas are even bigger, in both interest and potential profits.

And that leaves Warner-Amex fighting—as far as they are concerned—the good fight.



Good News For Insomniacs

Sports fans, hold onto your hats! The Entertainment and Sports Programming Network (ESPN) has announced that beginning this fall, it will be adding over 100 hours of NCAA college football to its schedule, bringing the total from that source alone up to 400 hours—or 66 games—for the three month college football season. On top of that, the one year old ESPN with its 4,100,000 subscribers began 24-hour, seven day a week service late last summer, thereby bringing more sports into the home than even the most ardent sports fan could ever dream of.

While over in Chicago, "superstation" WGN has grown to a 24-hour format seven days a week. It is estimated that through cable and microwave WGN reached two million-plus households across the country in addition to its local audience.

This January Home Box Office's new Cinemax movie service is also going the all-day all-night route.

Of course, the Cable News Network already offers around-the-clock programming, giving us all the opportunity to be well-informed and well-entertained at any time of the day or night.

Smile And Say "Vote!"

Delegates to the 69th annual convention of the Illinois Municipal League were treated to a little something different at the Chicago meeting last September. The Teleprompter Corporation—the nation's largest and oldest cable television operator—was there to make them all television stars.

"We've set up a studio where convention members may be interviewed for three to five minutes and then we'll play the tape back and have it critiqued by several media professionals," said Teleprompter's area manager, Richard Ehlenfeldt. Because of the drastic increase in the

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number of local cable outlets springing up across the country, public officials will be having many more chances to appear on the tube.

"The purpose of our program," Ehlenfeldt continued, "is to give these people some television experience and constructive evaluations of professionals so they will be more comfortable before a camera when they begin making more television appearances."

Of course, Teleprompter was not at the IML Convention merely to make stars out of local aldermen. In fact, they, along with a trio of other cable outfits were in town to show *their stuff* to prospective franchisers, each lobbying with friendly smiles and full bars to grab those unwired communities throughout the state. Teleprompter seemed to make the biggest impact with these potential customers. After all, nobody else was offering to turn them into their home-grown Johnny Carsons.

80 Count 'Em 80

QUBE, the two-way pay cable owned by Warner-Amex Communications, will appear in Pittsburgh in late summer or early fall of 1981. Court challenges notwithstanding,

lucky Pittsburgh residents who take the service will be able to avail themselves of 80 channels, as well as the much-reported "interactive" aspects of the system: instant communication with the cable's headquarters for ordering programming, engaging in instant opinion research, being able to buy auctioned items while sitting at home, and the like.

When the system is fully operational, it will originate from a \$5 million facility in downtown Pittsburgh and employ a staff of 200 people.

Canadian Cable Craps Out

Right now, it seems, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission is more interested in expanding the country's already existing television service into its more isolated sections than in getting their pay television system off the ground. A committee of CRTC members has placed Canadian cable and pay television all the way at the bottom of its list of priorities.

While this does not mean that the prospect of a Canadian cable system is dead, it does stall things for the time being—and possibly for the

next two years as well. Even when the cable operators to the north do start operating, it probably will not be in a manner much to their liking, as the CRTC believes the cable companies should be forced to compete with one another for the various local licenses. Furthermore, the CRTC does not want the Canadian systems to come under the auspices of a single national agency, which is contrary to the policy stated by previous communications ministers and the desires of the operators themselves.

In order to fulfill their function, the Canadian cable operators have been pouring big bucks into the United States' cable industry, buying up as many companies as they can. The regulations here are much less restrictive than in Canada, and, if nothing else, ownership of U.S. cable outfits at least allows our neighbors to the north to do what every company wants to do—make money.

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a giant step forward last September with the introduction of the *Home Shopping Show*. Now rather than going from shop to shop to compare merchandise and prices—or even tiring out your fingers by letting them do the walking—the only effort required is the switching on of your television set.

The *Home Shopping Show* is a one-hour, weekly program produced by Washburn Associates of Chicago.

We Have Met The Future And It Is . . . Columbus, Ohio?

The cities of Ohio have taken a lot of guff over the years as the brunt of many jokes, but that seems to be changing now thanks to events like WKRP and QUBE. But while WKRP is merely a fictional radio station, QUBE is Warner-Amex Cable's answer to the future—a way to talk back to your television set.

QUBE has been in operation in Columbus for some time now and has offered some interesting possibilities in the field of public opinion gathering. And now, in a test of 100 QUBE subscribers, viewers are being given a chance to establish a dialogue with their sets through a hook-up between Atari computers and the CompuServe Information Service.

This select group of video guinea-pigs will have access to news, stock market data and other information.

Each week, several advertisers present their products to the cable audience with the help of a regular host and hostess in ten-minute segments. Over 350 cable systems have already signed up to carry this new service, bringing shopping information into more than 3 million homes across the country. There is no dearth of advertisers, either. Bobbs-Merrill Publishing, *Better Homes and Gardens*, Burpee Seed Co. and Encyclopedia Britannica are just a few of the companies who have signed up for appearances on the program.

Will the *Home Shopping Show* do away with the Avon Lady? Stay tuned to your local cable channels to find out.

And they will be able to play video games, shop and bank, all just by using their Atari home computer.

So next time you hear someone putting down Ohio, stop them. After all, it appears likely they will get to the future before the rest of us.

BROADCAST

Better Red's Not Dead

Many vintage television shows and classic movies have been lost to posterity because of neglect or deliberate destruction by network and studio archivists. So it is no wonder that certain people are upset to the point of litigation at the very thought of a performer wanting to destroy his own work.

Some time back, one of America's comedic institutions, Red Skelton, supposedly made known his intention to have the only extant tapes of his classic television shows burned in

the event of his death. While Skelton disputes these reports—"Would you," he asked, "burn the only monument you've built over 20 years?"—a dozen of his former writers were taking no chances. They went to court and were granted a preliminary injunction enjoining the comedian from carrying out his alleged threat.

And while all this is going on, Red Skelton is hard at work—editing those same shows for proposed syndication, according to industry scuttlebutt. Kind of makes you wonder, but here's hoping the shows—and Red—stay around for years to come.

It Pays To Advertise

Despite the fact that the networks last year brought in a record amount of ad bucks—\$4.3 billion (according to the FCC's official dollar count) plus \$725,700,000 from the 15 local stations owned by the nets—it was not enough to offset rising costs, which jumped 19 per cent. At the same time, network executives are not exactly jumping from office windows at the prospect of the demise of life as they know it.

Perhaps the nets will be able to recoup some of their losses with this season's ad revenue. To get an idea of what it takes for you to be treated to the likes of Mr. Whipple and Aunt Bluebell check out these prices for one 30-second spot on prime time:

60 Minutes: \$150,000; M*A*S*H: \$150,000; That's Incredible: \$80,000; Laverne & Shirley: \$100,000; NFL Monday Night Football: \$115,000; ABC Friday Night Movie: \$90,000.

Benson: \$100,000; Barney Miller: \$100,000; Real People: \$95,000; Love Boat: \$105,000; Fantasy Island: \$90,000; Speak Up America: \$50,000; Dallas: \$145,000; 20/20: \$80,000.

Charlie's Angels: \$90,000; Buck Rogers in the 25th Century: \$60,000; Happy Days: \$110,000; WKRP In Cincinnati: \$95,000; White Shadow: \$85,000; Vega\$ \$100,000.

For The Man Who Has Everything

In what could be an institution-shattering historical move, the Federal Communications Commission has proposed opening up the airways to hundreds, perhaps thousands, of new television stations.

It involves the broadcast "translator" used to boost television signals. By using a less-powerful translator, mini-television stations could be established to cover a city neighborhood or a rural town.

FCC Chairman Charles Ferris, in announcing the proposal to amend the rules covering translator use, stated "A month ago the commission removed the regulatory weeds of the last decade by freeing the cable industry from regulatory oppression. Today the commission is planting seed for hundreds of new television stations."

Chairman Ferris continued, "Low-power television broadcasting, the first new broadcast service considered by the FCC in 20 years, offers the same intriguing possibilities as the advent of commercial television broadcasting in the late 1940s."

The FCC appears very enthusiastic about the advent of mini-stations. The FCC staff has been directed to facilitate paper work on the 15 pending applications to operate low-power stations. Ten of these applica-

tions were filed by the Community Television Network, headquartered in Washington, DC. They would like to set up studios across the country that would aim their programming at blacks and other minorities.

As things now stand such stations are not specifically barred but current regulations make them financially prohibitive. One such stipulation is that the station must broadcast local programming originating from a local studio. To keep on top of the needs of the community they serve, mini-stations will have to conduct extensive, costly surveys. Under current rules, no mini-stations now exist, but the rule amendment would rescind these difficulties.

Current rules would be replaced by requirements that would prevent mini-stations stepping on the signals of other stations and keep the

viewing area of the transmission within certain defined limits.

At this point the push to open up mini-stations is merely a proposal. While the FCC is enthusiastic—the proposal passed 7-0—it will be some time before the new rules become a reality.

Public comments on the proposal will have to be heard first at forums around the country before it can be voted on again, and, of course, a mountain of legal objections can be expected from existing broadcast facilities in those areas. It may take years, and it may never happen, but the day may come that when hundreds of privately owned full-service mini-stations dot the land, the American public truly will have broadcasting which specifically addresses the needs of their communities.



Copyright Rights

A decision has finally been reached on how to slice up a rather substantial pie accumulated under the compulsory licensing provision of the new copyright law, and the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) is none too pleased with the outcome. The aforementioned pie consists of \$14.6 million collected in 1978 from cable television operators as fees for the use of copyrighted programs.

It took the Copyright Royalty Tribunal two years to decide who gets what percentage of those royalties and the way it breaks down is as follows: the Hollywood studios and other program syndicators not affiliated with the networks will receive

75 per cent of the money, sports teams 12 per cent, music recording firms and public television will share nine and three-quarters per cent between them and broadcasters will get three and one-quarter per cent. And that is where the NAB complaint comes into the picture—they feel that the broadcasters are entitled to a bigger share: 20 per cent to be exact.

The NAB executive committee, already fuming over a spate of FCC decisions deregulating the cable and pay television industries, is not going to take this latest development sitting down. In fact, they plan to take their gripe to Congress and let them decide who should have the rights to those lucrative copyright bucks.

Say It Ain't So, Joe!

Can it be true? Does someone out there in the world of high finance really have their eyes fastened greedily on ABC, Inc.? Well, according to the folks at ABC, no. But *The Portfolio Letter*, a respected stock market newsletter, says otherwise. In fact, they have claimed that a giant unnamed conglomerate is hard at work on a take-over, having already offered \$60 a share—double the going rate—for each share of ABC stock.

If this is indeed the case, then the nameless conglomerate would indeed have to be gigantic—and such behemoths as General Electric, American Express and Aetna have

(Continued on Page 19)



W TELEV CHARA STOP BUD

The Spin-Off

IT'S ALWAYS SAD TO WATCH friends drift apart.

When a child, I believed little people lived in my television set. They performed their stories for us when it was their turn, then went to the back of the set to hang out with their tiny little pals.

Believing this, I never wondered when characters would travel from show to show. The larger, more puzzling question was why they didn't do it more often.

It was easier to understand why they didn't cross from network to network; Mom wouldn't let us cross streets by ourselves.

The success of the spin-off, an ancient programming technique, makes this childish dream more believable. The most fertile breeding ground for a new season is an already popular old one.

It's not enough to give a star a new series, however. Since most of the country spends more time relating to the tube than to other humans, the stars are our friends and companions. We are not only confused when they change names and personalities, we feel betrayed, demanding a consistency from our television friends that

HY VISION CTERS BEING DIES

Phenomenon

we've long ago despaired of finding in the real world.

The first spin-off champ was the old favorite, *Make Room for Daddy/The Danny Thomas Show*. On one episode, the star and his family were stopped for speeding in a hick burg called Mayberry. The episode was so popular that Andy Griffith, Don Knotts and company were given their own show. In turn, this show and its stars became so hot that it begat *Gomer Pyle* and *Mayberry, RFD*. Griffith never equaled his success as Sheriff Taylor because we feel betrayed that he was not our old pal anymore, or, even worse, that he had ditched Opie and Aunt Bea.

Bill Dana, playing elevator operator Jose Jimenez, was another popular character on the *Thomas* show. No one was surprised when he moved up to a better job in a big hotel on his own show.

Thomas never appeared in these spin-offs, but the situations didn't demand it and we didn't expect him to. We did expect him to be a regular on *Make Room for Granddaddy* when it came on a few years ago, and, of course, he was.

Sometimes as little as a running

Martha Thomases



joke on a hit series is enough to sprout a new series. In the classic *December Bride*, Pete (Harry Morgan before he joined the army) constantly complained about his wife, Gladys. We never had an opportunity to see if his *kvetching* was justified because Gladys was kept off-screen (except for a costume party appearance in a gorilla suit). A year after the last episode of *December Bride*, the networks, in their wisdom, gave us *Pete and Gladys*. It was no surprise that Ruth Henshaw and Hilda Crocker from the mother-show frequently dropped in on the neighbors, who used to visit them. That's what friends do.

Twenty years later, the MTM folks took Rhoda's doorman, Carlton, a disembodied, inebriated voice for years, and made him a cartoon character. Rhoda, Brenda and their neighbors in the building had apparently moved out in search of a building with video security.

A shining example of TV neighbors was producer Paul Henning's hayseed trilogy of the 1960s: *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *Petticoat Junction* and *Green Acres*. Henning created a hilariously surrealist atmosphere, a unique and separate reality, capitol: Hooterville, U.S.A. These programs shared an old-fashioned, rural viewpoint (Hollywood's impression of one, anyway) and then added an extra twist possible only in television. They shared sets, and characters skipped from show to show as the spirit moved them. So did jokes. We were never surprised when one of the *Green Acres*' Lisa Douglas malapropisms traveled from her farm to Sam Drucker's store or to Jed Clampett's Beverly Hills mansion. The people in these shows were united by more than a production company; they shared their own logic, where parallel lines always meet.

Norman Lear took up the slack in the 1970, with his patriarch, *All in the Family*. This hoary classic begat *The Jeffersons* and *Maude*, which in turn begat *Good Times*. These characters were family, and got together twice a year or so, like any other family. Archie Bunker's neighbors and relatives were the debris of the nuclear family dismemberment that changed the world. They fought, made up, fought some more and stalked off to their own shows in a snit. We were glad they always made up again, but we were secretly delighted they could have the same grudge matches we did.

Garry Marshall gave us *Happy Days*, which spawned both *Laverne and Shirley* and *Mork and Mindy*.

Again, characters would schlep from show to show, but this time we knew they were "special guest stars," not really family. We didn't believe they were related, we knew they were ratings boosters. When you're a star, you can't go home again.

The Mary Tyler Moore Show provided us with real friends, not guest

Archie Bunker's neighbors and relatives were the debris of the nuclear family dismemberment that changed the world.

stars. The characters were people we cared about, and felt we knew. In many cases, we knew the people in Mary's life better than we knew the people in our own. And we knew that Mary, Lou, Murray, Phyllis, Sue Ann, Georgette and Ted were good friends of each other as well as ours. They teased each other and got on each other's nerves, but we never lost sight of the love going hand-in-hand with these trials. They filled in the gaps the 70s ate into the family to assure us we would never be lonely. With the di-

What became of Mary Richards? Did she meet a nice young comedy writer and move to New Rochelle to be his wife and raise his son?

vorce rate climbing steadily it's no wonder Mary and her friends topped the ratings.

Mary kept an eye on her friends after they flew the nest. She was there for Rhoda and Phyllis when they had their crises and celebrations, and they were there for her. We knew their friendship was based on more than convenience and proximity.

But what about Lou? Mr. Grant, we know from seven years of observa-

tion (and eternal reruns) is a gruff man with a heart of mush. He may bel-low, he may drink too much, but when he cares about someone, he feels it in his guts. We saw him through his divorce, through his wife's remarriage to another man. We knew that his friendships were deeper than most, and that he cared about how his friends felt, not about how well they could stroke. He and Mary had a special relationship. We expected them to fall in love. When they didn't, we realized exactly how great their friendship was.

And then Lou gets a big job in Los Angeles, and turns his back on his old friend. He's been out there a couple years now, running a newspaper city room, and he never calls Mary on the phone, never writes her a letter, never invites her to visit. We can see Billie Newman is a cute reporter, but we can also see Lou regards her as a daughter (albeit a highly professional one) than as a friend.

What happened?

Did Lou and Mary get drunk the night they were fired and have an embarrassing, disappointing one-night-stand? Did Mary finally get married to an insanely jealous man who won't permit her to communicate with the other men in her life?

Has Mary joined a feminist-separatist commune that forbids any contact with Y chromosomes? Did she meet a nice young comedy-writer and move to New Rochelle to be his wife and raise his son? Has Lou been bombarded with gamma rays, causing selective amnesia, forcing him to forget single, middle-aged women?

Actually, none of these are the real story.

Soon after her unfortunate dismissal from WJM News, Mary met a nice doctor a few years older than her. Initially infatuated by his sense of humor, she got to know him better, heard him talk about his work, and she came to care about him deeply. Mary *would* be attracted to a medical man, since she so often filled emotional prescriptions for her friends. He also talked obsessively about his experiences in the Korean War, stories he'd kept bottled up inside for 20 years. He told how it made him feel to heal kids and send them out to get shot at again. He can't talk about it to the friends he made over there, even his old buddy Trapper, now a surgeon somewhere in California. Meeting Mary is really a new beginning for him.

So they get married, move to Crab Apple Cove in Maine, and Mary lives happily 'ever after as Mrs. Benjamin Franklin—Hawkeye—Pierce. ■

NEWSLINE

(Continued from Page 15)

been bandied about as the possible prospective buyers—since a company the size of ABC, Inc. would cost several bundles to buy. The first half of 1980 ABC's revenue hovered somewhere in the neighborhood of \$1.13 billion.

Still, ABC denies knowledge of a take-over bid by anyone and industry analysts tend to back that up, noting that ABC, Inc. stock has shown no unusual action since the rumors came to light. On the other hand, an announced \$150,000,000 line of credit extended to ABC by 12 banks has some eyebrows raised. Is the money for development of prime time television programs as some think, or might it be used by ABC to fight the take-over by buying up huge blocks of its own stock?

If You Don't Like It, You Can Always Change The Channel

The Gallop opinion research organization polled nearly 1,500 adults for their opinions on the state of television. It found that 37 per cent were not satisfied with the quality of movies on commercial television; 38 per cent felt similarly about programming in general. On the other hand, 52 per cent were satisfied with TV-movies and 48 per cent thought television programs were okay.

The French Connection, Part III

Used to be that television viewers were forced to rely on PBS for their doses of "foreign"—usually British—television fare, but no more. Cable television has joined the foreign import game and they are going PBS one step better.

In addition to British-produced documentaries, dramas, musical programs and entertainment shows available on many cable systems from the English Channel, satellite technology also allows us to get more than 20 hours a week of French programming as well. Telefrance USA is a prime-time package of French television shows, movies and European made specials, all dubbed into English for our consumption.

If such programming is successful, who knows what we could see coming over the cable next. Maybe Bulgarian game shows?

RATINGS

Cable Doing Boffo B.O.

The operators of cable systems have long hailed pay television as the viewer's only alternative to standard network fare and last May this claim was amply substantiated by no less than the A.C. Nielsen Company.

From their sample of 9,182 homes wired for cable, the Nielsen people found that for the week of May 15 to 21, more people watched cable television during prime time than watched network programming. Home Box Office pulled in an impressive 25 share of the audience, as opposed to 23 shares for ABC and CBS and 17 for NBC.

And what were the winning attractions that brought all this about? Well, HBO's premiere of *The Deer Hunter* was the major draw, pulling in an incredible 41 rating in cable homes, leaving such hits as *One Day At A Time* with a mere 12 and *CHiPs* with a disappointing 11. Other sure-fire audience grabbers included such films as *Moonraker*, *Fiddler on the Roof* and *Same Time Next Year*, as well as a musical special with Bette Midler.

While these figures seem to vary from week to week depending on such factors as scheduling and programming, it is obvious that slowly but surely, cable television is inching its way up in the ratings to take its place right along side the Big Three in the ratings war.

Do We Have Anything To Ad To That?

Arbitron, the media-survey organization which is the main competitor to Nielsen, has released the Arbitron/Video Probe Index, a look at current trends in the public's reaction to "The New Electronic Media."

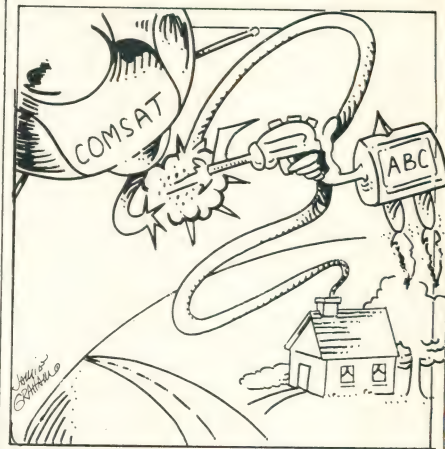
The Video Probe Index discovered 40 per cent of cable subscribers do not pay the extra fee to receive movies because they believe the cost is inordinate. Those who do receive the service prefer a flat monthly rate to a "per presentation" fee.

Those surveyed indicated they would not mind commercials on pay TV as long as they did not interrupt the entertainment.

SATELLITES

Comsat To Earth . . . Is Anybody There?

If ABC had its 'druthers', it would appear that the network would just



as soon not see you in the future with an earth station in your backyard. ABC would like to see the FCC out of the decision-making process of what rules will govern this soon-to-be-extremely-lucrative area.

Instead Congress, ABC asserted in letters to the Chairmen of the House and Senate commerce committees, should be the ultimate decision maker on satellite reception. The networks, expecting to lose substantial shares of the viewing audience to cable and pay television in the next decade certainly do not want another area of competition in the form of earth stations—particularly in light of marketing plans being discussed by satellite outfits like COMSAT.

COMSAT is currently mulling over a plan to market pay signals to small earth stations a few years hence, bypassing both cable and local stations of course. ABC would like to give a bit less choice to the public it seems.

TV SETS—BIG AND SMALL

Hang It All!

Until someone can make liquid crystal televisions work, the only way we are going to even approach the feel of a movie theater in our homes—or in our friendly neighborhood taverns—is with projection television.

The Sony Corporation has done its bit to bring a little bit of the Bijou home with two models of a new wide-screen projection system, the Videoscope. Unlike the other systems on the market, Sony's Videoscope boasts a separate wall-mountable screen available in either 50-inch or 70-inch sizes.

The unit, which retails for between \$2,500 and \$3,000—depending on the screen size—gives, according to Sony, a clearer, brighter image than the original one-piece models. Still,

Sony must be feeling just the slightest schizophrenic over Videoscope: not only does it compete against the older one-piece systems marketed by their competitors, but against the two models that Sony itself still has on the market.

The Whole World Is Watching—Almost

You would think that come night-fall, every home in America has its television switched on and its occupants planted before its warming glow. But if you think that, you would be wrong. According to a survey by the Television Bureau of Advertising 2.1 per cent of this country's households do not even (shudder!) own a television set.

In other words, some 1.6 million households are spared the insanity of the \$1.98 *Beauty Show* and the tedium of political conventions. It also means a large chunk of this country is not reached by the \$10 billion a year in television advertising.

But if the advertisers are worried, they may take heart in the fact that the number of tubeless homes is dwindling rapidly—140,000 previously "unwired" households added television sets to their decor since last year.

Buy, Buy, Buy!

Despite recession and several years of declining shipments, television sets are beginning to sell well once again. Though sales in general are down for the entire year so far, an increasing demand for sets has been noticed since July. Indeed, some manufacturers are predicting 1980 will turn into the third best year for sales since 1954.

A spokesman for the Electronic Industries Association noted the cost

of gasoline, vacations and outside entertainment are keeping people at home and they are giving more attention to their television sets. Replacement of color television sets is thought to be a major reason for this surge, along with the burgeoning gizmo market: sales of video-cassette recorders are expected to top off at 800,000 units this year.

Can We Quota You On That?

For the last six years, South Korea has been exporting millions of color television sets to the United States. But the Korean people themselves have not been allowed to own any of those sets until just this year.

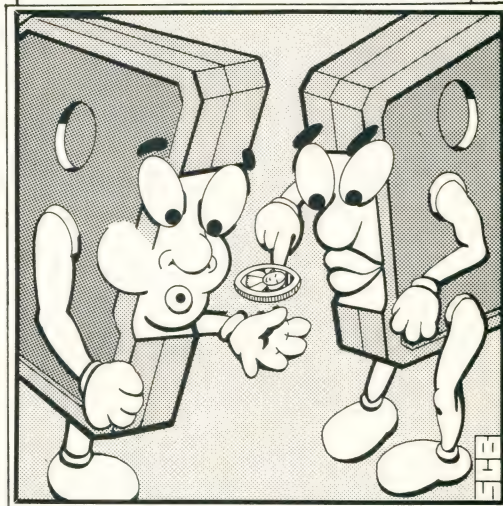
Back when the South Korean manufacturers first set up factories to turn out all these millions of sets, then-President Park Chung Hee placed a ban on domestic sales. This was all part of his stiff program of austerity for his people. Park's plan did allow for the eventual sale of color sets, but only once the gross national product reached an average of \$2,000 per person in the country.

Though the South Korean GNP currently stands at about \$1,660, the ban has been lifted, but only, it is believed, as a concession to the United States, which placed stiff quotas on the importation of Korean color sets in 1978 as a result of Park's ban. Obviously the lifting of the ban by the current South Korean government has done its job—the annual quotas have been steadily increasing ever since the Korean announcement.

And interest in color television is running high in the newly liberated country—on the first day, over 3,000 people an hour filed past a display in one department store in downtown

Seoul. Sales, however, have not matched the interest. On the average, about 50 sets are sold each day.

Still, one has to wonder what all the hooplah is about. None of the three Korean television networks are yet geared for color broadcasting, nor will they be ready until early next summer.



TELETEXT

Say, Why Don't We Just Flip A Coin?

It is to be expected that whenever some new technology rears its head it will bring with it controversy—especially if that technology is available simultaneously in more than one form. We saw it happen in the battle between the Beta and VHS home videocassette recorder formats, and even now the different videodisc systems are manning the trenches in preparation for the fight for market supremacy. And though you might not have heard much about it yet, there is still another war going on in the home video field, this one pitting CBS against just about everyone else.

What is all the shouting about? It is about the introduction of a teletext system on American television. Teletext is, quite simply, the closest thing to a televised newspaper currently available—a separate cable channel that features everything from up-to-the-minute news to current movie theater listings. Various systems have been operating successfully in England and Europe for some time now and it is these systems that the American industry has been diligently studying in an attempt to choose the best format.

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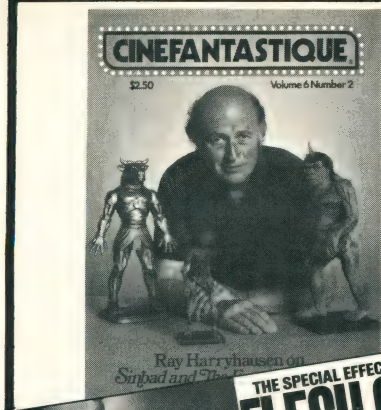
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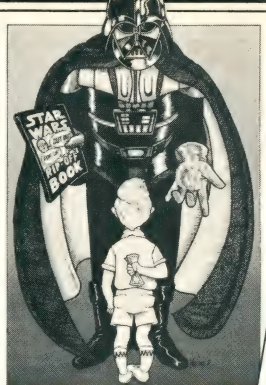
George Lucas does for dry goods what Madison Avenue did for breakfast cereals.

By Bill George

The time is 1980. The place Chicago's premier department store, Marshall Field's. The occasion, a pitch for Levi Strauss's line of durable children's pants, offered by the fashion critic, that dozens of dungeoneers—Darth Vader.

Wait a minute. Darth Vader? How, you may ask, does Mr. Vader—whose own wardrobe is large, black—qualify as the Mr. Jaws of the Levi reader? Well, a representative of Levi's is using Darth Vader, not "Smaug," he explains. "We made the connection." Our boy was then related to the banding and Youth Forum of Ford's where we were.

No comment. "Smaug" is, and so are the profits on the \$100 merchandise. About \$100 worth by the end of this year, according to executives of Levi's, which acquired the film after industry level turned down George.



Lucas' ideas of R2D2 mugs and little window robots. And that figure is just for the toys and "action figures," and doesn't include the millions of books, records, masks, shirts, posters, bedding, food, lunchboxes, mugs, sweat shirts, calendars, models, lunchboxes, underwear and so. R2D2 mugs, that have been snapped up by an eager public.

We asked the H.E. Harris company, manufacturers of something called, believe it or not, "The Star Wars Postage Stamp Collecting Kit," whether there wasn't some form of exploitation going on here. "We have no use of the word exploitation," said a company representative. "It's a negative connotation, like getting your hand caught in the cookie jar." Using money to sell toys isn't a new idea. In 1915, there were lots of Charlie Chaplin merchandisers, but Paramount Ltd. in the late 1920s in form and operation is even fan club (50,000 members at \$5 apiece) to help keep money high and sales booming. And booming in the word. All right, STAR WARS and THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK could rack up as much as \$100 million in sales of related merchandise, a phenomenon which makes the combined sales of Batman, Davy Crockett and Muttley. Movie: look, the small change. That's a lot to be reckoned with.

an open letter to Universal and Dino De Laurentiis

by Paul Mandell

Can film producers hope to improve on a film classic? No. They only hope to get rich trying.



CINEFANTASTIQUE.

The magazine that separates the flick from the flack.

Sometimes the truth hurts.

When you tell a screenwriter that his storyline is incoherent, that hurts. When you tell an artist that his magical vision of the future is bland, that hurts. And when you tell a director that his over-hyped megabuck spectacular is, well, boring, that's got to hurt.

But at CINEFANTASTIQUE, one of the oldest and most respected magazines devoted to horror, fantasy and science fiction films, we feel that sometimes you've got to hurt the genre you love.

So, unlike other magazines that heap praise on even the most undeserving of films, we've always called a spade a spade, and a turkey a turkey.

Unfortunately, that objective philosophy has made us somewhat unpopular in Hollywood, where legions of press agents (known in the trade as flacks) would have you believe every film is the most exciting feature since GONE WITH THE WIND, and every special effect is a unique new concept that's never been done before.

We treat the genre seriously, and pride ourselves in having the most complete and in-depth coverage of any magazine on the market. Our issues devoted to the behind-the-scenes wizardry of such films as STAR WARS, CLOSE ENCOUNTERS, ALIEN, FORBIDDEN PLANET and THE BLACK HOLE—written and reported by our international network of correspondents—have set standards for film journalism that no other magazine has matched.

But frankly, we're considered to be something of a trouble-

maker in Hollywood. Producers, directors and press agents don't always return our calls. Apparently, our independent nature has won us few friends. That is, except for our growing number of readers, who have faithfully come to expect the latest information—and the most stunning visuals—on horror, fantasy and science fiction films.

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See Page 71 for more information.

In order to make the choice, the Electronic Industries Association had set up a panel, hoping to be able to reach an agreement on the one system that would be chosen as the industry-wide standard. And that is where the first shots in this war were fired.

CBS, impatient with the EIA panel's failure to come up with a recommendation, went straight to

the FCC with a request that the French teletext system, called Antiope, be the one adopted in this country. This move did not sit well with the EIA, who countered quickly by making public a preliminary poll of its committee members stating a preference for one of the two British systems, Ceefax or Oracle, hoping to forestall a hasty decision by the FCC in CBS's favor.

Television set manufacturers have lined up behind the EIA—or at least *against* CBS—since the acceptance of the Antiope system requires the most extensive changes in set design.

If nothing else, however, the move by CBS might very well work to our advantage. By spurring the EIA into action, it could bring teletext—be it similar to Antiope, Oracle, Ceefax or another system altogether—into our homes sooner than would have otherwise been the case.

Teletext—Another One

Teletext has finally come to Australia, where the government recently has granted approval to television stations to broadcast the system. Australian teletext has been tested throughout the continent successfully for the past couple of years. The down-under continent joins England, France and Canada on the front line of the teletext revolution—a revolt that has yet to reach U.S. shores.

PIRACY

License To Tape

All videocassette recorder owners know that if you see something on the tube you would like to have, all you need do is pop in a cassette, press "record" and it is yours. The people who produce, star and broadcast these shows may not like

the idea, but there is little—if anything—they can do about it.

It is a little different for institutions such as schools. If they show material pirated off the air, someone is bound to find out about it. And even though such outfits as the Public Broadcasting System do not offer their programming on cassettes for institutional use, they are trying to both accommodate the public and protect their copyrights by selling schools a license to tape and replay their material.

Films, Inc./Homevision is offering the licenses to such PBS programs as Carl Sagan's 13-part series *Cosmos* and Jonathan Miller's *The Body In Question*, both currently being aired. Now schools can have these series for use in educational programs without the added worry of a charge of illegal video piracy hanging over their heads.

Of course, the PBS licensing deal works solely on the "honor system"—it can in no way prevent scofflaws from going ahead and taping and replaying shows to their heart's content, but it at least offers those less larcenous souls a legal option.

Maybe We Oughta Go Back To Hoistin' Up Landlubbers Instead

As the home video and over the air pay television industries continue to grow, their problems grow right along with them. But thanks to several recent court rulings, one of the major difficulties, video piracy, seems well on the way to being alleviated.

Ralph E. Smith was convicted by a federal jury in Houston on 36 counts of copyright infringement and the foreign or interstate transportation of stolen goods. Mr. Smith's crime? As head of Televideo Corporation in Houston, he would tape movies from television and sell them, primarily to large companies, many of whom shipped these purloined pictures overseas for the benefit of their employees. It would appear that this form of piracy carries some pretty harsh penalties. While they may not hang you from the yardarms, you can be slapped with heavy fines and even heavier jail sentences—up to 10 years and \$10,000 for each count.

Meanwhile, the courts are still working on a piracy case in Phoenix, Arizona. Oak Industries, the local

subscription television outlet, has successfully enjoined the rather blatantly named Pirate Electronics of Phoenix from manufacturing or selling unauthorized and therefore illegal decoding devices capable of picking up their On-TV signal. Although this decision is only a preliminary injunction, it looks good for the pay television industry—and bad for the growing number of video pirates in television land.

Now You've Really Got To Pay

Over in California, a bill prohibiting the sale of "black boxes" in the state has been passed by the state legislature and comes on the heels of two judicial proceedings—in Los Angeles and Detroit—which ended in a flurry of confusion concerning the legality of such decoders. The National Subscription TV Association (NST), hopes this legislation will end the controversy, at least in California, and serve as a model for other states to follow. The bill provides for a fine of \$2,500 and/or imprisonment for manufacture or sale of unauthorized descramblers. The NST also hopes that similar Federal legislation can be passed.

In a related development, a new device has been developed by Polymedia, a video software producer, to help prevent piracy of signals from videocassettes in West German entertainment establishments. While it does not seem to have a use in the home market, it is the first supposedly fool-proof mechanism to be developed in the cassette field.

Polymedia hopes to sell the device as part of an entertainment package known as "Disco-promotion" to the 4,000 or so musical entertainment establishments in West Germany.

Here's how it works:

A sealed mini-cassette contains the programming and computes its own use. The mini-cassette is then inserted into a specially adapted player and unlocks the player so it can be used.

The players would be *rented*, as would the cassettes, eliminating the need for owners of discos to buy programming outright. The box is periodically picked up by its owner, Polymedia, and put into a computer which then provides information about its usage and calculates charges. The renter pays only for the material he has used.

Polymedia has tested it out in 100 discos. The initial program consists of varied entertainment and advertising.

NEW RELEASES

From CBS VIDEO ENTERPRISES (tape):

The Wizard of Oz—(1939), the classic L. Frank Baum fantasy starring Judy Garland, Frank Morgan, Bert Lahr, Jack Haley and Ray Bolger. Victor Fleming, Director.

2001: A Space Odyssey—(1969), Stanley Kubrick's science fiction opus, starring Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood.

The Dirty Dozen—(1967), murderers and thugs band together to battle World War II. Starring Lee Marvin, John Cassavetes, Charles Bronson and Donald Sutherland. Robert Aldrich, Director.

Dr. Zhivago—(1965), a tale of love and death in revolution torn Russia, starring Omar Sharif, Julie Christie and Geraldine Chaplin. David Lean, Director.

An American In Paris—(1951), Academy Award winning musical with superb production, music by Gershwin, and choreography by star Gene Kelly. Also stars Leslie Caron and Oscar Levant. Vincente Minnelli, Director.

That's Entertainment—(1974), a compilation of great moments, songs and stars from the heyday of MGM's musical supremacy, hosted by Fred Astaire and James Stewart. Compiled and directed by Jack Haley.

Ben-Hur—(1959), a double-cassette featuring one of the greatest epics of all time. Stars Charlton Heston, Jack Hawkins and Stephen Boyd. William Wyler, Director.

Meet Me In St. Louis—(1944), the 1903 World's Fair is the setting for this musical starring Judy Garland, Margaret O'Brien and Mary Astor. Vincente Minnelli, Director.

A Night At The Opera—(1935), stars the Marx Brothers in what is considered by many to be the quintessential Marx movie. Sam Wood, Director.

Blow-Up—(1966), a photographer inadvertently becomes involved in murder. Stars Vanessa Redgrave, David Hemmings and Sarah Miles. Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni.

Rio Lobo—(1970), classic John Wayne western vehicle. Howard Hawks, Director.

The Boys In The Band—(1970), the first mass audience film to deal frankly with homosexuality. Stars Frederick Combs, Leonard Frey and Cliff Gorman. William Friedkin, Director.

The Sunshine Boys—(1975), stars George Burns and Walter Matthau as octogenarian vaudevillians attempting a reluctant comeback. Also stars Richard Benjamin. Directed by Herbert Ross.

Adam's Rib—(1949), Garson Kanin and Ruth Gordon's excellent comedy starring Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn as a husband and wife lawyer team at odds over a case. George Cukor, Director.

Street Fighter—(1974), martial arts great Sonny Chiba stars in this X-rated action flick with lots of kicking and fighting.

Rock Concerts

James Taylor—a live performance by a perennial favorite.

Electric Light Orchestra—the visually stunning rockers star in this concert film.

Rude Boy—the popular British rockers, The Clash, star in this new rock 'n roll feature.

From HOME THEATRE, INC. (tape)

Richard II—a double-cassette features a two and one-half hour presentation of the Shakespeare play filmed at the Globe Playhouse in Hollywood.

From MEDIA HOME ENTERTAINMENT (tape)

The Man From Clover Grove—(1980), Ron Masak stars in this children's comedy about an absent-minded toymaker.

Electric Light Voyage—a pleasing presentation of computer animation and music.

Alice Cooper And Friends—rock 'n roll, as only Alice can make it.

Mustang—(1978), an X-rated look at the famed house of prostitution, directed by Robert Guralnick.

From TIME-LIFE VIDEO (tape, available only to members of Time-Life Video Club)

My Brilliant Career—(1979), recent Australian release which has received critical acclaim.

History Is Made At Night—(1937), a tragicomic look at love triangles, starring Charles Boyer, Jean Arthur and Colin Clive. Frank Borzage, Director.

The Kid From Left Field—(1979), stars Gary Coleman and Robert Guillaume in this made-for-television film.

The Lady Killers—(1933), James Cagney stars as a gangster who turns Hollywood star. Also stars Mae Clarke and Leslie Fenton. Directed by Roy Del Ruth.

The Two Of Us—(1968), the story of a Jewish boy sent away from World War II Paris to live with an anti-Semitic guardian. This French film was directed by Claude Berri.

The Collector—(1965), chilling story of a man who collects the oddest things. Stars Terrence Stamp and Samantha Eggar. William Wyler, Director.

The Mystery Of Kasper Hauser—(1975), one of the best of German director Werner Herzog's new wave films.

The Happy Hooker Goes To Washington—(1977), stars Joey Heatherton as Xaviera Hollander, recounting the "Happy Hooker's" experiences in the nation's capitol. Directed by William A. Levey.

8½—(1963), Federico Fellini's masterpiece of introspective cinema. Stars Marcello Mastroianni and Claudia Cardinale.

From MCA Distributing Corporation (tape)

Blues Brothers—(1980), the wild and crazy musical comedy starring John Belushi and Dan Ackroyd as Jake and Elwood Blues. Features cameo appearances by such blues greats as Cab Calloway, Aretha Franklin and Ray Charles. Directed by John Landis.

Cheech And Chong's Next Movie—(1980), the drug culture's answer to Abbott and Costello star in their second feature film. Directed by Thomas Chong.

It Came From Outer Space—(1953), Richard Carlson and Barbara Rush star in this 3-D feature as the townfolk discover there are alien monsters invading from space. Cassette comes with 3-D glasses. Jack Arnold, Director.

The Creature From The Black Lagoon—(1954), another 3-D science fiction favorite of an amphibious creature that stalks an expedition up the Amazon River. Cassette comes with 3-D glasses. Stars Richard Carlson and Julia Adams. Jack Arnold, Director.

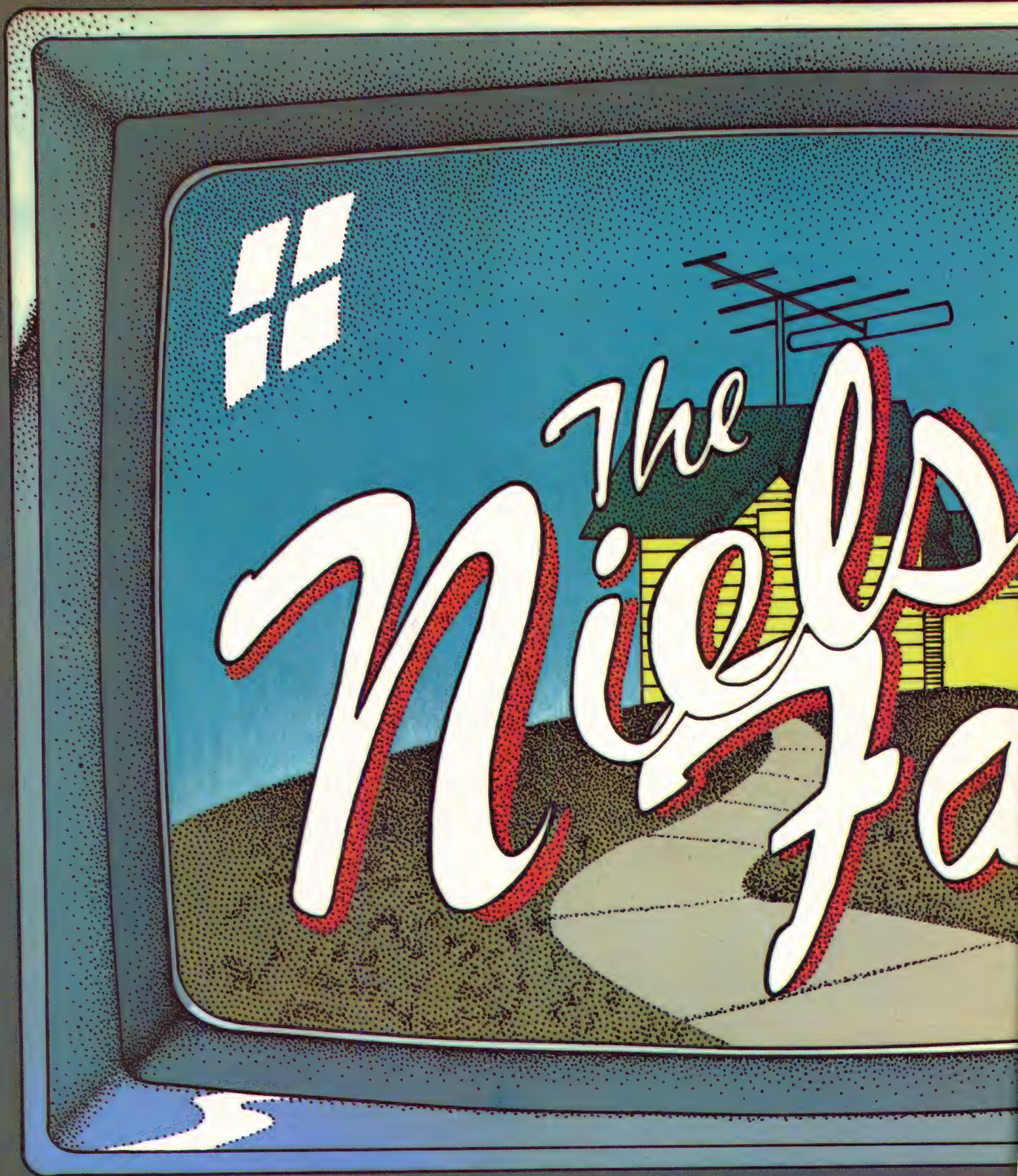
From MAGNETIC VIDEO CORPORATION (tape)

Julia—(1977), Jane Fonda, Jason Robards and Vanessa Redgrave star in this movie based on the Lillian Hellman story. Directed by Fred Zinnemann.

Damien, The Omen II—(1978), with William Holden and Lee Grant battling against the coming of the Antichrist. Directed by Don Taylor.

Saturn III—(1979), a science fiction/horror flick starring Kirk Douglas and Farrah Fawcett as two chemists working aboard a space station orbiting Saturn.

All That Jazz—(1980), Bob Fosse's autobiographical feature starring Roy Scheider as a successful but troubled producer/choreographer of Broadway musicals. Also stars Jessica Lange and Ben Vereen. Directed by Bob Fosse.



*A comprehensive look at television's
the Nielsen Ratings: what they are,
gathered, and how they affect
and home video.*



en family

Illustration by John Zielinski

*judge and jury—
how they are
broadcast*



Part One of a SERIES by Ann DeLarye

EVERY TIME YOU SWITCH ON your television set, you become a product worth millions of dollars. You are what the networks and local stations deliver to the advertisers whose commercials sponsor your entertainment.

Integral to the selling of your viewership are television ratings, which are the only way stations and networks have of describing you—the product to the advertisers who would buy you.

The best-known of the television audience measurement services is operated by the A.C. Nielsen Com-

A Nielsen family can be any group of persons living together, from two parents with ten kids to one elderly person living alone in a studio apartment.

pany headquartered in Northbrook, Illinois. Since 1950 they have produced the famous (or infamous) Nielsen ratings which influence everything in the television industry from program cancellations to the type of commercials you see.

The Nielsen ratings claim to represent the viewing habits of 76.3 million American households accounting for 95 per cent of all households in the United States. In Nielsen language this is "95 per cent TV penetration." Measuring viewers on a scale this size is a complicated and expensive task.

Among other findings, 2.7 viewers per set watch roughly six and one half hours of television fare per day, up from five and one half hours per day ten years ago. Yet who those viewers are, what they watch, and how much money they have to spend on advertisers' wares is all charted through information supplied by a surprisingly small group of households—a group the Nielsen Company finds statistically sound.

These households are the "Nielsen families" and your chances of being chosen to be one or knowing a family that is one are roughly 60,000 to 1. Because of the intense scrutiny under which the A.C. Nielsen Company comes by networks, stations, advertisers and the Broadcast Ratings Council (the official watchdog group for the ratings industry), the process of choosing Nielsen families is done under strict scientific and mathematical discipline. It is a process which has often been questioned but repeatedly proven to show a relatively

low margin of error and a high degree of accuracy.

To select their "national panel" Nielsen goes to the United States Census Bureau. There they obtain listings of all counties in the United States and their populations. Counties with populations of 240,000 or more are separated out for individual considerations. There are 346 such counties as of the 1970 Census (Nielsen will not start using 1980 Census statistics for another two or three years). These comprise 40 per cent of the United States population. All counties with less than 240,000 people are clumped into 264 groups. Each group receives individual consideration.

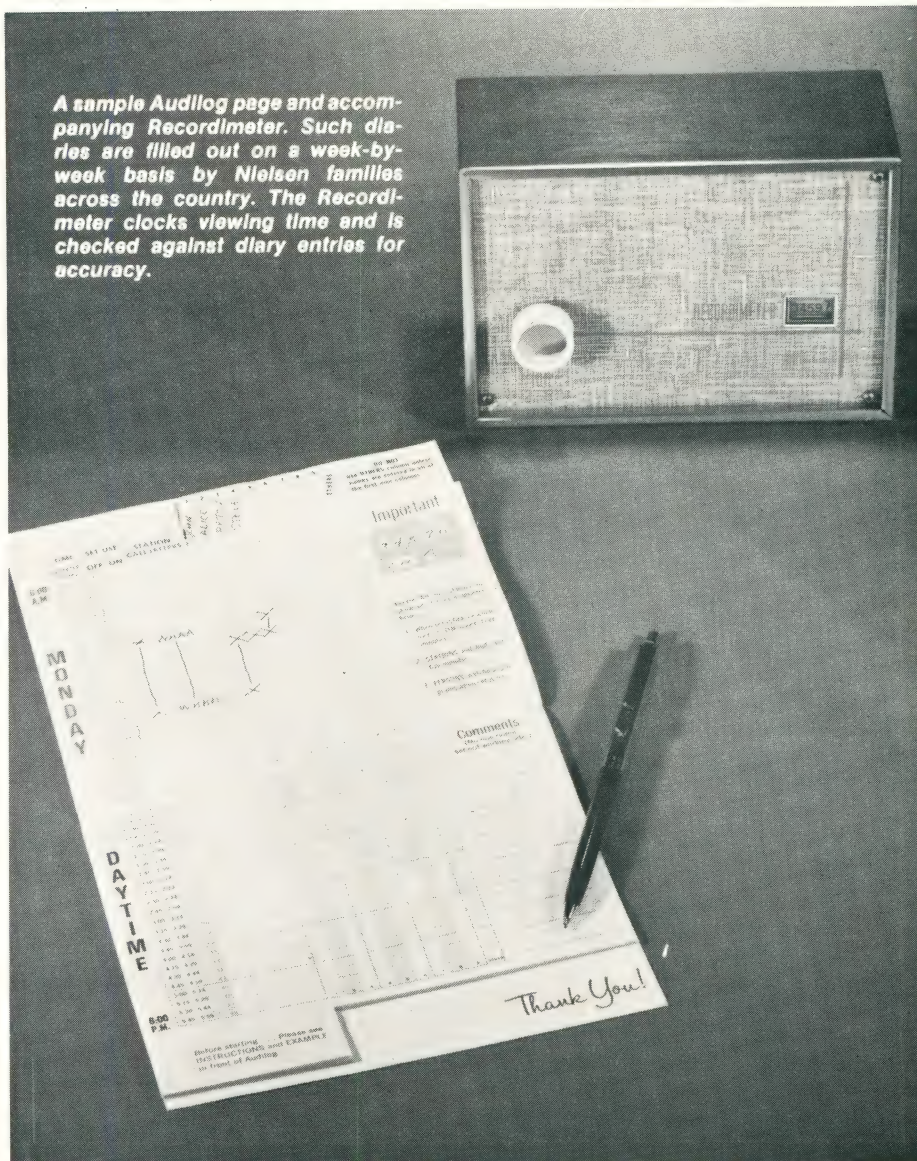
From all the above counties and county groups, a certain number of "block groups" are randomly selected. The number of block groups chosen is proportionate to the size of the population in that county or

county group. Then an individual block-group is selected. This is not done by a human being but by a computer which randomly selects a number, for example "500." Nielsen employees count through the block groups in the county until they come to the 500th.

Then the process is repeated to choose an individual block out of the selected block group. If there are ten blocks in a block group and the computer randomly generates the number two, then the second block in that block group is visited by a Nielsen field worker who lists every address on the block.

Then it is back to the computer. Again, a random number is generated, and addresses are counted through to determine which home is to be selected as a Nielsen family. A number of alternate selections are generated in the event the

A sample Audilog page and accompanying Recordmeter. Such diaries are filled out on a week-by-week basis by Nielsen families across the country. The Recordmeter clocks viewing time and is checked against diary entries for accuracy.



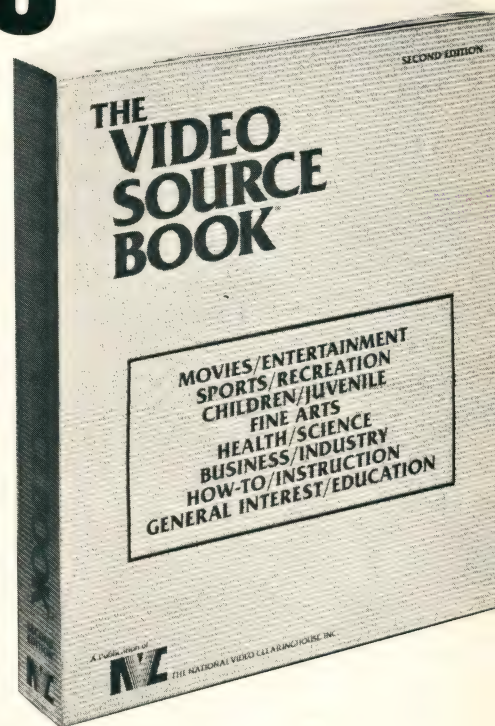
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initial family does not wish to cooperate. At no point has human preference entered into the selection process.

97 per cent of the television viewers in the United States have a chance to be selected for the Nielsen "national panel." The other 3 per cent specifically excluded are those living in hotels and motels, military barracks, college dormitories and fraternal organizations.

Although this would seem to exclude a significant number of viewers in the 18 to 24 age group, Larry Frerk, promotion director for A.C. Nielsen Inc. claims this excludes less than 1 per cent of the overall population and none of the advertisers who cater to this age group have felt it important enough to commission special viewing studies.

A Nielsen family can be any group of persons living together, from two parents with ten kids to one elderly person who lives alone in a studio apartment. There are only a few instances where a Nielsen family, once chosen, will be denied the opportunity to participate. For example, if the family turns out to have included station or network employees, it is automatically eliminated. Once chosen, however, a Nielsen family could participate for up to five years if it so desires.

Participating families receive some slight monetary compensation, although Nielsen relies on convincing their participants the real reward lies in making a significant contribution to viewing trends. Compensation can be a token 50¢ for filling out a local ratings diary for each week, or go as high as an initial \$25 and four dollars per month, with half of all television repair bills picked up by Nielsen for families in the national metered panel.

Ratings of nationally-viewed programs which are broadcast by the networks are all done under the umbrella of the Nielsen Television Index (NTI). There are two completely different sets of sample households used by the NTI: one set of 1,200 Nielsen families is called the national metered panel and is given a device called a Storage Instantaneous Audimeter (SIA). This device is attached to each television set in the household and records such information as length of time set is in use, what channel it is tuned to and how long it is tuned to each particular channel. It gives an accurate account of how many households are watching television, although it cannot measure how many people are sitting in front of those television sets. The SIA is the

"If you watch households on a year-by-year basis you can see how their television viewing habits are changing. A five year maximum is a happy medium."

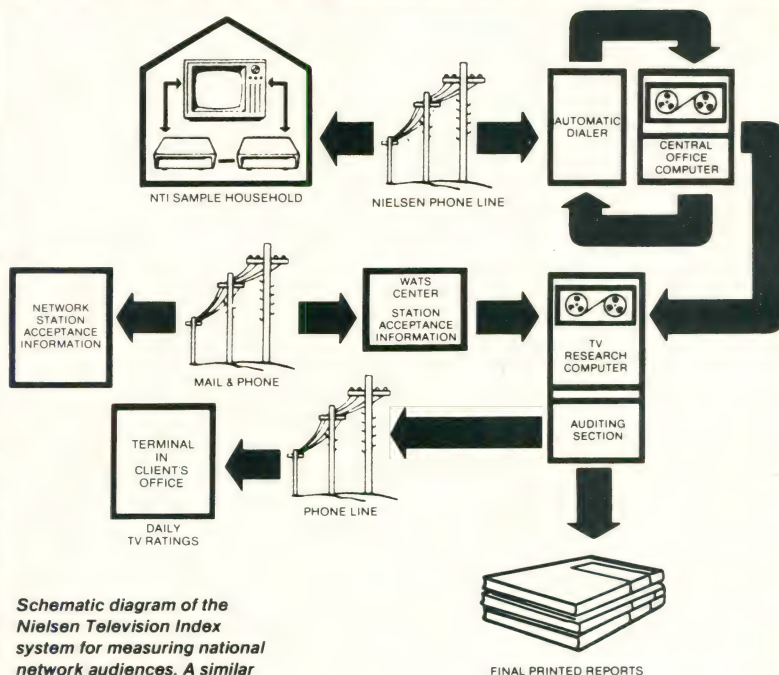
device people refer to when they talk about the Nielsen meter or black box.

SIA results are transmitted over telephone lines directly into a Nielsen computer located in Dunedin, Florida; the Nielsen family plays no part in this act. Twice daily, the Dunedin computer automatically dials the

phone number of the family to which the SIA is connected and electronically retrieves whatever information on television set use has been recorded since the last call. If a family chosen for the Nielsen sample does not have a telephone, Nielsen will run in a special line. The family is not charged for these calls.

A second set of national sample households consists of 3,400 Nielsen families who are given diaries to fill out on a weekly basis. These diaries are called "Audilogs." In the national sample, the Audilog is used purely for demographic information which breaks down an audience into its various characteristics: age, gender, income and the like. The diaries also give Nielsen information on how many people (as opposed to households) are watching.

Nielsen families who fill out diaries are also given meters of sorts if they are participating in the national sample. These are called Recordimeters and they are far more simplistic than SIAs. They merely record the amount of time a diary family has its set in use every day. This is used solely as a double-check against the diary. Any day which does not have the same amount of time accounted for in the diary as was picked up by the Record-



Schematic diagram of the Nielsen Television Index system for measuring national network audiences. A similar system provides local ratings for stations in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

© A.C. NIELSEN INC.

imeter is automatically eliminated from consideration.

Recordimeters are equipped with a buzzer and a flashing light which goes off every half hour to remind viewers to make diary entries. These signals can be turned off.

Only diary households in this national sample are given Recordimeters. Diary households in local samples are not.

Local viewing is measured by a separate division of the company called the Nielsen Station Index (NSI). There are 221 "markets" (urban and surrounding areas) in the NSI and in most cases ratings are gleaned from diary families. There are four exceptions: in the New York, Los Angeles, Chicago and San Francisco markets some—but not all—Nielsen families will get SIAs.

The samples are always separate. Homes with SIAs do not get diaries. Homes with diaries do not get SIAs. The SIAs are used to determine all numerical information like ratings; the diaries provide all demographic data. National diary ratings are discarded in favor of the more accurate, machine-measured SIA rating, but local diary ratings are kept and tabulated.

One other way Nielsen has of obtaining rating and demographic information on the local level is through the use of "telephone coincidentals." Usually commissioned by a single advertiser, station or network these are called "coincidentals" because Nielsen researchers telephone between 200 and 300 households while the show in question is being broadcast and ask whomever answers whether the television set is on, what is being watched, and who is watching.

A good many crank calls of this type are made. Nielsen's Larry Frerk advises his people will inform the subject, "we are the Nielsen company. We are engaged in a survey. Right now, we want to know what you're watching." We don't ask them anything more than that. If people find out there are all kinds of other questions being asked, like 'are you going to be home tomorrow?' or something, they know it's not legitimate."

Once Nielsen families have been chosen and the telephone coincidentals conducted, the ratings can be compiled from the gathered data.

Most average viewers use the term "ratings" inaccurately. When people refer to the "ratings" for a given show, they usually mean "share." The dif-

ference between the two is tricky.

To define the term "rating," one must remember that 98 per cent of all households in the United States have television sets. These households are called "TV homes." A rating is the percentage of all the TV homes in the country which are tuned in to a specific program.

That seems straightforward enough, but there is a catch. Not all TV homes in the country are tuned in all the time. Many TV homes have their television sets turned off at any given point. That is where "share" becomes important, as does a very important term, "homes using television" (HUT).

The HUT measurement tells what percentage of all TV homes have television sets in use at any given time

Your chances of being chosen a Nielsen family— or of even knowing one— are roughly 60,000 to 1.

during the day or evening. The HUT measurement, then, is the tuned-in population.

The "share" is the percentage of this tuned-in population which is watching a specific program. You do not need the HUT measurement to compute a rating, but you do need it to get a share.

A rating will tell you what percentage of everyone watched a certain show. A share will tell you what percentage of everyone who was watching at the time watched a certain show.

This defines the most basic and vital of the Nielsen terms. Now you may want to try your hand at some of the simple mathematical formulas used in their computation. For example: you can find the number of homes using television (HUT) if you know a show's rating and its share. $HUT = \text{Rating} / \text{Share}$. Similarly, you can figure out a program's rating if you know its share and the number of homes using television during the time it was aired: $\text{rating equals share multiplied by HUT}$. And if you know a show's rating and the HUT at the time you can find the share: $\text{Share} = \text{Rating} / \text{HUT}$.

Using that last formula: Show X

comes up with a 20.0 rating during a time when 70.0 per cent of all television-equipped homes have their sets turned on—your HUT figure. The share is computed as follows: $\text{Share equals } 20.0 / 70.0$, or 29.

Share is the most widely used of the above statistics in determining how well shows are doing. Share is a more constant measure than a rating, which can be affected by such events as work hours, holidays and weather.

Ratings, share and HUT numbers will indicate how many households watched a show, but they do not tell how many people were watching. In some households, the set may have been on with no one watching. In others, ten people may have been clustered around the set. There may have been more than one set on with more than one person watching. This is where the Nielsen diary plays an important part.

Through the diaries, Nielsen is able to determine not only the number of people per set but also who was watching and what they viewed. This is information very much sought by advertisers, most of whom have definite ideas about the types of people they want to reach.

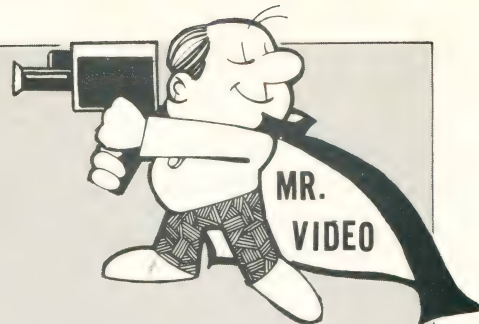
The most basic of this kind of demographic information breaks down viewing audience by age, gender and household income.

There are three principal age categories—18 to 34, 35 to 54 and 55 and older. These are the categories the majority of advertisers are interested in reaching with their commercial messages. However, there is a separate category for teenagers and one for children, the latter measuring viewers as young as two years old.

The racial characteristics of viewers also can be determined. More emphasis is being placed on getting accurate statistics about the viewing preferences of blacks and Spanish-speaking people. Nielsen's Frerk claims errors stem from the fact these populations have been less likely to cooperate in providing information to his company's researchers, perhaps because of fear as to how such information might be used and by whom. Plans are being implemented now to increase the rate of cooperation among these groups.

Light-viewing households and heavy-viewing households are broken out and compared against other data. For example, 40 per cent of all viewing done by light-viewing households (those which watch less than the average six and one half

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hours per day) is done in prime time. Light-viewing households tend to be smaller, childless and tend to have lower incomes.

Nielsen compares past and present figures and publishes the Nielsen Tracking Reports to spot viewing trends. The HUT figures are closely followed in the broadcasting industry: when the figure goes up, everyone is happy—TV people because their product is more attractive and advertisers because they can reach more people for less money. When this figure goes down, there is a mad scramble to find out why television fare is not "pulling" or attracting audiences.

Frerk notes: "Television viewing has been up every year since 1975. It is now at a record high. When it dipped in 1977, people started asking what was wrong with the television industry. Occasional fluctuations are normal."

Nielsen is always careful to point out their statistics are estimates which will have an expected and usually quantifiable amount of error. Promotion director Frerk explains, "None of these [statistics] are reality. They're all estimates, so we couch all our numbers in those terms. We think they are reliable estimates and we put the standard error, wherein a 20 really lies somewhere between an 18.7 and a 21.3. Within two standard errors of 1.3 each, 95 out of 100 ratings are correct. The other 5 per cent are the odd-balls."

Based on statistical probability, Nielsen would have to quadruple their sample size in order to effect a 50 per cent reduction in their standard error.

Another factor built-in to the Nielsen measurement system for statistical soundness is that the sample is kept reasonably constant over a selected amount of time. States Frerk, "We have what we call 'sample turnover' built into the system. We turn over 20 per cent of the sample every year. But because of attrition, whether it is because of people moving, urban renewal, deaths, or they do not want to cooperate anymore, the actual turnover runs about 45 per cent a year. Somebody could be in that sample for as long as five years. We want some trend data.

"If you watch households on a year-by-year basis you can see how their television viewing is changing. If you are changing all the households every year, you cannot watch that kind of thing. If you keep at it too long people feel that you are not reflecting what is happening in the real world, that you are getting a sample that may be biased and not truly representative of the population anymore. So

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- ☐ Frankenstein
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we feel [five years maximum] is a happy medium. You still get trend data and you still get turnover.

"There was an incident some years back where a gentleman said he found some household names in the trash can behind our office," which, Frerk pointed out, is logistically impossible. "Then he tried to 'rig' the ratings by contacting a bunch of sample households and told them to watch the Carol Channing Show because they were going to ask them a bunch of questions about some commercials that were on the show.

"But in order to answer the questionnaire they had to watch the show and that hypoed the rating. But we found out about it and it only affected less than 10 per cent of the total sample. We just eliminated those homes.

"We have safeguards built in where we can uncover these things. People alert us to the fact somebody is trying to contact them. All in all the people in the broadcasting business try to keep it pretty clean."

No matter what the safeguards, people wonder about foul play when their favorite shows are suddenly and mysteriously cancelled. In reality, there are three factors which influence cancellations, besides the whims of station and network programmers: (1) If a show's ratings appear to be going down each year, or each show declines after its initial debut; (2) if the show does not get a good rating in comparison to its competition; and (3) if the show is attracting an older and older audience.

Good ratings in regard to competition are relative. A show up against *Roots* would not have to do as well as a show up against *California Fever* in order to survive.

Attracting the older audience may also mean that a show gets cut, depending upon what day and time the show is running. If the show is scheduled during prime time, it will almost certainly be cancelled (or at least moved to another time) because the advertisers want to attract the 18 to 54 segment in the evenings. This segment has more members and more income than any other, and in order to justify the higher rates charged to advertisers during prime time, the networks want to deliver this younger group.

Certainly a culprit in the fast removal of shows at the beginning of the television season is the "overnight" rating. These are national ratings taken from the national Storage Instantaneous Audimeters (SIAs) and completely compiled within one

and a half days after the show has run. A network can tell immediately if a show's audience is declining or nonexistent—hence, the quick cancellation.

Nielsen and other ratings services conduct what are called "sweeps" in November, February and May of each year. During sweeps, every market is measured at once, and Nielsen contacts 200,000 extra households to keep diaries for one week. The networks save their most expensive and impressive entertainment for these periods in an effort to boost audience levels as high as possible.

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impressive
entertainment
for these
periods.**

If you have been wondering why there is so much unimpressive entertainment on around Christmas, that is because no ratings are taken at this time. Each year there are four "Black Weeks," during which time networks and stations can put on their least commercial shows with impunity.

Reruns are put on during the summer because it has been found that homes using television can dip by as much as one-third during these months when people spend more time out of doors.

Nielsen and other ratings services are beginning to measure the newer forms of television viewing, particularly community antenna television (CATV) and pay cable. It is predicted CATV penetration could hit 30 per cent of all U.S. homes by late this fall,

and the demand will be there for information on the type of audiences commercial CATV stations can deliver to advertisers.

However, in anticipation of this need for viewership studies, Nielsen has begun to conduct diary surveys of pay cable and CATV usage called the Nielsen Homevideo Index.

In May of last year, the pulling power of pay cable was illustrated by the fact that Home Box Office ran second only to ABC-TV and slightly ahead of CBS-TV and NBC-TV in Nielsen-measured pay cable TV homes.

As far as measuring videocassette viewership, Nielsen and other services have conducted ownership/usage/demographics surveys using detailed questionnaires, but no method of continuous measure has yet been developed for use. One problem faced by Nielsen lies in altering its Storage Instantaneous Audimeter to be able to record not only videocassette usage (of which it is currently capable) but also videocassette content.

Nielsen is not the only company involved in measuring television audiences. A formidable competitor is the Arbitron organization which measures nearly as many households for nearly as many clients. Arbitron uses methods similar to Nielsen's.

Marketing Evaluations Inc. of Port Washington, New York does a mail survey called TVQ to determine the "audience appeal" of various television shows. The TVQ lists the percentage of people familiar with a show and divides that by the number of people who say it is one of their favorites.

Audience Studies Inc. is a company located in California which airs television pilots before test audiences. In addition to being verbally interviewed about the shows, audience members are asked to push various buttons located at their seats when they see parts they like and do not like.

The Axiom Market Research Bureau of New York puts out the Target Group Index, an annual survey of 30,000 adults. Target Group Index (TGI) cross references television usage with product brand usage. TGI also provides demographic information and psychographic information (how a person's self-image affects his or her buying habits). Data is gathered through booklet questionnaires.

Next month, we will discuss how programmers and advertisers use Nielsen statistics to plan what you see on television. ■

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- ☐ **SON OF KONG**
- ☐ **THE WARRIORS***
- ☐ **THINGS TO COME (1938)**
- ☐ **DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS**
- ☐ **THE CAT PEOPLE**
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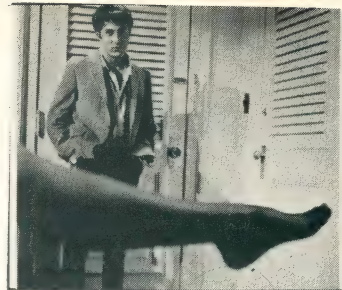
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- ☐ **CHINATOWN***
- ☐ **TEN COMMANDMENTS**
- ☐ **THE THIRD MAN (Orson Welles)**
- ☐ **CITIZEN KANE**
- ☐ **THE DEEP***
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- ☐ **BLAZING SADDLES***
- ☐ **NASHVILLE***
- ☐ **THE EXORCIST***
- ☐ **OH, GOD!***
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- ☐ **BARBARELLA* (Jane Fonda)**



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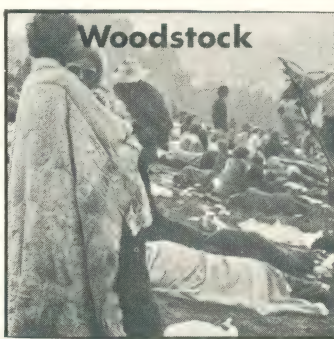
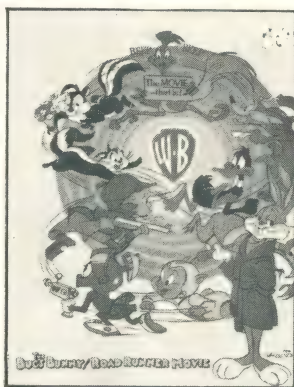
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- ☐ SUPERMAN* (1940s Max Fleischer Featurettes)
- ☐ CHARLOTTE'S WEB
- ☐ BUGS BUNNY/ROAD RUNNER MOVIE*
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- ☐ KING CREOLE*
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- ☐ GREASE*
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See Page 71 for more information.

RETURN OF THE PAPER CHASE

or

How the crusty but lovable John Houseman achieved the near-impossible: convincing the PBS to save a critically-acclaimed but low-rated commercial network series.

ARTICLE by Marilyn Ferdinand

WELL, TELEVISION FANS, IN CASE YOU HADN'T NOTICED, the new fall season is here again. As always, the discerning viewers of tasteful, well-crafted programming will find precious little to cheer about. Razzle-dazzle pap, sophomoric scripting, swivel hips and clowning dips still clutter the vacuum tube, and the most important brain tickler of the season probably will be who will be shooting J.R. again.

But, gentle people, all is not lost. Come January, after much of the commercial fluff has fallen by the wayside, a gem the networks discarded abruptly in 1979 will shine again on public television stations across the country. *The Paper Chase* is coming back to score a rare, sweet victory for upscale television, and the story of its resurrection is a study in dedication, cooperation and perseverance.

It is remarkable that *The Paper Chase* was singled out for another chance from among the many blanched bones of fine programs in the television graveyard. It did indeed deserve one for being so unfairly dropped after only one season. But, what makes *The Paper Chase* unique is the loyalty it boasted even before the series first hit the airwaves, a loyalty established in earlier incarnations.

The intriguing story of Harvard Law School and the mental duel between an idealistic, first-year student, James T. Hart, and his irascible, enigmatic, contract law professor, Charles W. Kingsfield, Jr., first captivated readers when John Jay Osborn published his novel, *The Paper Chase*, in 1971. It was not long before Twentieth Century-Fox announced that it had purchased the film rights to the book and would commence production of a full-length movie featuring the legendary producer, John Houseman, in

the role of Professor Kingsfield. The choice of Houseman was both original and inspired.

Mr. Houseman, of course, was no stranger to the film industry, but this opportunity offered him a unique challenge. For the first time, when the film hit the theatres in 1973, everyone agreed that John Houseman's screen debut was worth the wait. The film, which co-starred Timothy Bottoms and Lindsay Wagner, was elegant, intelligent, compelling—in short, a perfect fit for the likes of Houseman and one which he acknowledges as having entirely changed his life. He naturally developed a special fondness for *The Paper Chase* that eventually led to his agreeing to recreate his quintessential Kingsfield for the television series.

Twentieth Century-Fox produced 22 episodes of *The Paper Chase* for CBS's 1978-1979 season and in so doing maintained the high standard of excellence achieved by its predecessors. In fact, John Jay Osborn contributed five scripts to the series. When the show premiered it stood head-and-shoulders above most of the other season offerings.

"The response was wonderful," said Houseman. "The only thing that wasn't wonderful were the numbers judged against *Laverne and Shirley*." That season marked the heyday for ABC's teenage tripe, and without further ado, CBS summarily can-



celled the show. "We had 12 million viewers, all of whom were extremely enthusiastic," commented Houseman, "so that CBS, when they took the show off the air, received undoubtedly a couple of hundred thousand letters of protest, which was absolutely an abnormal number." Abnormal number or no, nothing could save *The Paper Chase*.

This axing was a tremendous disappointment to the people at Twentieth Century-Fox who were very proud of the program. After all attempts to keep the show on the air failed, the disposition of *The Paper Chase* fell to Steve Orr, Vice-President of Domestic Syndication at Twentieth Century.

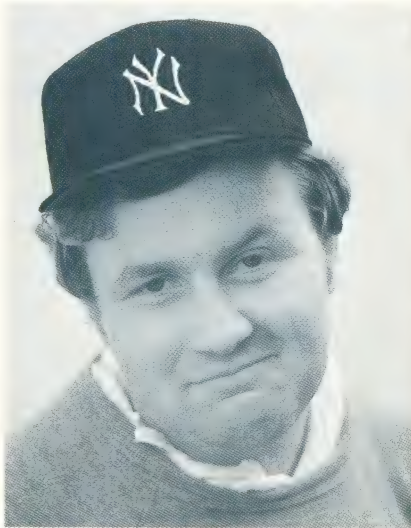
"I became in charge of trying to find a way to market *Paper Chase* in reruns with the hope of going to new production," said Orr. "And, I must admit, that seemed kind of a long-shot, particularly going to new production, because once you get by the commercial networks it starts getting pretty bleak. I talked to the possibility of licensing it late-night to the networks. I talked to the possibility of putting together an ad hoc network, of bartering episodes and getting national advertising as we would get local outlets all across the country. PBS came to mind right away. They seemed like they would be suited for one another." Quite independently, some people in Chicago had come to the same conclusion.

The first, tangible sign of life for *The Paper Chase* came from the office of William McCarter, General Manager of WTTW-TV/Chicago, one of the largest and most creative public television stations in the country. At an informal gathering of some of the executives of the station, the conversation turned to *The Paper Chase*. One of the participants in the discussion, Tom Engel, Director of Program Development, recalled "people talked about what a pity it was that a show which had such incredible promise just died. And, it came about in a sort of vague way. I don't even know who made the remark that it would be something worth doing something about." Thus, with this initial spark of interest, Engel made his first inquiry to Twentieth Century-Fox in August of 1979.

He was not disappointed. Twentieth Century had made no firm commitment to anyone. WTTW was the first public television station to voice an interest and would be the one to take the bows if it could indeed revive *The Paper Chase*. What was irresistibly attractive to Twentieth Century was that WTTW was mainly interested in continuing the series with new episodes, not just in buying up the old ones.

In addition, Twentieth Century wanted its first chance to work in public television. If they could pull it off, it would be the first time that a U.S. network comedy-drama series moved to public television. To both parties it felt like a perfect pairing, and WTTW was granted a very generous option on the 22 existing episodes. And that is when the real work began.

Tom Engel recalled the tremendous cooperation they received from Twentieth Century: "They were awfully accommodating in terms of our



James Keane played Willis Bell.

If they could pull it off, it would be the first time an American series moved to public television.

schedule, which they're not used to. A network can make a decision instantly, because they have a great deal of money. We have to make a decision and then go find the money to implement the decision. We have been lengthening agreements since the day we started, getting an extra month here and an extra month there, because it does take a very long time for us to pull the pieces together."

Twentieth Century, understanding the financial straits that a public television station always labors under, tried to keep the cost as low as possible. "This is not what you would call a profit venture for Fox in terms of the reruns. The money that we are charging is mostly the residual costs." The grand total, according to a WTTW spokesman, was \$1.9 million for all 22 shows broadcasted four times in three years—small potatoes for Fox, but still a sizeable nut to crack for WTTW.

The search for funds started among the corporate underwriters, and it proved to be an exceedingly difficult task which took close to a year. Even with the help of a promotional film which John Houseman did for WTTW, close to 100 firms were contacted before the Atlantic-Richfield Company agreed to underwrite a portion of the cost.

Tom Engel was somewhat baffled by the numerous refusals. "The only answer I was given by some people was that they wanted a new show to put their name on. Arco, I think, just realized the potential. They didn't really hesitate once they had some money and looked at it." The total amount they earmarked for the project was \$400,000.

The station then went to other public television stations for assistance. "We presented the program to the SPC, the Station Program Cooperative," Engel explained. "Once a year all the PBS stations get together. All the stations offer programs, and they are collectively purchased by the stations. Then, the stations have the right to show them, because they've paid for part of the production. That's the way, for instance, our shows *Soundstage* or *Sneak Previews* were purchased. And," he continued, "we failed. It was too expensive."

By now, the original agreement with Fox had undergone some radical changes. WTTW targeted only 13 programs for purchase, for four airings within two years, and their option was continued on the remaining nine shows. The cost dropped to a more manageable level at just under \$1 million. That still meant, however, that they needed to raise more than a half-million dollars.

This they accomplished through the joint funding provided by over 100 member-stations in the Eastern Educational Network, one of several independent, mutual networks of public broadcasters across the country. Thus, when the 13 episodes of *The Paper Chase* are ready to air in January of 1981, they will be carried by the stations of the EEN—which, incidentally are located all across the United States.

And still the story is far from over. After a brief hiatus, the people at WTTW will start the treasure hunt all over again in order to purchase the remaining episodes. And, of course, new filming is still uppermost in everyone's thoughts.

The first, new *Paper Chase* footage probably will be a series of wrap-arounds designed to fill the eight minute vacancy created by the lack of commercials. Although nothing is official yet, the current vision of what would happen in these segments is as follows: At the end of each show, the

particular issue or point of law that provided some theme for the program would be isolated. Then Houseman, in character as Kingsfield, would discuss the topic with a notable legal luminary while they both stroll across a college green.

Since the plan is still tentative, no one has yet been asked to appear in these snippets, but Tom Engel has some definite ideas about who he would like to invite. "I wouldn't mind seeing Warren Berger. I think Shirley Hufstедler would be very good—she

original programs for a second season in 1981-1982.

"Even before the show was finally cancelled, there was a good deal of talk about how we could go ahead with the second year," remarked Houseman. "Would we keep the kids sort of like Peter Pan, eternally in first year, or would we allow them to progress. We would probably pick them up, or other students, in second year, and Kingsfield would be doing less open classwork and more seminars and personal interviews with the

now in this project, and we all want to take advantage of the interest that's been generated by it."

Of course, the most insistent interest has been shown by the program's original audience. One WTTW insider noted that "we received I don't know how many letters from people saying, 'it was our favorite show. We never could understand why it went off the air. Thanks.' A number of people who did that, I mean from all over the country, included a check in their letters."



The crew from *Paper Chase* ham it up for the cameraman.

was a federal judge before she became Secretary of Education. I think Carl Bernstein has some very interesting things to say. People like F. Lee Bailey might be very interesting. It would depend largely on the topic we'll deal with." The funding for the segments would come out of WTTW's own pocket, and the filming would most likely take place in Chicago.

Finally, assuming everything has gone well, the response to the rebroadcasts is good enough and that enough silver can be jangled loose... well then, the fantasy/hope that has kept all the players involved in this behind-the-scenes "paper chase" may indeed come true. Twentieth Century-Fox and WTTW are optimistically predicting that a new *Paper Chase* program could air along with the first 13 reruns in the first half of 1981, possibly in the form of a 90-minute special. Following that, another four or five episodes could be filmed to accompany the remaining

young men and women."

Most *Paper Chase* fans would, of course, like to see the show's original cast (James Stephens as Hart; Tom Fitzsimmons as Ford; Robert Ginty as Anderson; James Keane as Bell and Francine Tacker as Elizabeth Logan) reassembled for the new episodes. "They desperately want to," Houseman said, "but you know, they've all done awfully well, and that becomes a matter of scheduling."

Where the filming would be done is another matter that would have to be settled. The best bet right now would be at the Twentieth Century-Fox studios where the original sets probably still exist, although the possibility of finding a suitable location in Chicago has not been ruled out entirely. But whatever the arrangement, everyone is looking to get things rolling as quickly as possible.

"I think the feeling between us is that the sooner, the better," said Steve Orr. "There is a lot of interest right

The overwhelming good feeling that has been generated by *The Paper Chase* is inspiring to behold. The universal enthusiasm over the show's rebirth is a tribute to the purveyors of good television programming.

"It wasn't the formula programming that you usually see," Steve Orr concluded, "and it's terrific to save something that you think is worthwhile."

Tom Engel agreed, "I'm really pleased that we have been able to take the first step in the continuation of the series. I think it would be just a really excellent program to continue, and I hope it does, if the money is out there."

And, John Houseman remarked in a Kingsfield-like way, "Well, everybody's behaved awfully well, I must say. I'm delighted to see it back on the air. I think it was an important, nice program, and I'm delighted to know it will continue."

Mr. Houseman, in that sentiment you are not alone. ■



PERSPECTIVES ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION

FOR SEVERAL DECADES democratic America has been supporting a monarchy within its own borders that looks like it is here to stay. Television has raised its first generation of American children, and now the second generation is having its crack at ruling the airwaves. Children and television. Stuck together like peanut butter and jelly, like Chang and Eng, like tar and feathers. And today, the range of video experiences available to the young viewer is staggering.

In addition to the hours and hours of network programming, there are literally thousands of choices available to the home video consumer, a perfect alternative for parents who wish to control more strictly what their children view.

Thus, this first segment in a three-part series on children's television looks at the home video marketplace. The listings to be found below are certainly not comprehensive, but they do give a fair overview of the kinds of programs that are being made available to young people. All of the selections fit standard video formats and have been arranged by age group. The distributor and air time have also been listed.

FOR PRE-SCHOOLERS AND GRADE SCHOOLERS

The Apple

Pyramid Films, 8 min., pre-school/grade school

Gifted British animator George Dunning creates a comedy that would have pleased Galileo: a meek man, too shy to pluck an apple off a tree, changes radically when the apple falls into his lap.

The Beast of Monsieur Racine

Weston Woods, 9 min., pre-school/grade school

Charles Duvall lends his elegantly throated narration to this award-winning animated tale of an unlikely friendship which forms between Monsieur Racine and an innocent-looking creature who has been stealing his prize pears.

**First in a SERIES
by Marilyn Ferdinand**

The Brothers Grimm

Maryland Center for Public Broadcasting, 30 min., pre-school/grade school

The Pickwick Players bring two oldies-but-goodies to life with their characterizations of "Hansel and Gretel" and "The Fisherman and His Wife."

Caterpillar

Learning Corp. of America, 16 min., pre-school/grade school

Vaudeville lives in this award-winning animated film about a harmonica-playing boy and his dancing caterpillar. The winning combination of a catchy tune and the color green (shades of Kermit the Frog!) sets the world on its ear.

Christmas Rhapsody

Britannica Films, 11 min., pre-school/grade school

The story of "The Littlest Christmas Tree" gets a fresh

teur horticulturist Harold has when he sketches an enchanted garden where nothing will grow. The trouble isn't root rot, but rather a giant witch.

I Am, I Can, I Will Series I

I Am, I Can, I Will Series II

Family Communications, 15-20 min., pre-school/special education

The series is designed to help handicapped children develop their potential and understand their limitations. Series I (five programs) helps those with below-average language skills. Series II (ten programs) is for children with average or above-average language skills.

The Night Before Christmas

Britannica Films, 11 min., pre-school/grade school

The classic poem, "A Visit From St. Nicholas," gets the



**Vaudeville
lives in
Caterpillar,
about a
harmonica-
playing boy
and his
dancing
caterpillar.**



retelling which showcases Mother Nature as much as Father Christmas.

The Glob Family

Learning Corp. of America, 7 min., pre-school/grade school

The youngsters should enjoy the eyeball kicks provided by some animated inkblots, and it should help get them ready for their first Rorschach test.

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Coronet Films, 11 min., pre-school/grade school

The familiar story of a blonde who ended up not having much fun is told especially well in this award-winning film featuring real live bears.

The Great Toy Robbery

Nat'l. Film Board of Canada, 7 min., pre-school/grade school

An animated film that gets Santa Claus into trouble out West. Mean, but dumb: where on earth can you fence toys?

Harold's Fairy Tale

Weston Woods, 8 min., pre-school/grade school

Prize-winning animated film about the problems ama-

full treatment with original music and authentic costumes for its nineteenth century setting.

Paddington Bear Series

FilmFair Communications, 17 min., pre-school/grade school

Thirty programs make up the adventures of Paddington, a founding Peruvian bear, that the Browns take in as one of their own. The individually available titles include "Paddington Goes Underground," "Paddington Hits Out" and "Trouble at the Launderette." Bears will be bears.

Tree Top Tales

Centron Films, 15 min., pre-school/grade school

The animals of Beechwood Forest and their Tree Top House roam again in six programs: "Time to Wake Up," "How Does Your Garden Grow," "The Black White Kitten," "Learning Fast," "Happy's Hiccups" and "Dazzling Diamonds."

Where the Wild Things Are

Weston Woods, 8 min., pre-school/grade school

A classic children's book comes to the screen in this animated version of a boy king and his kingdom of weird and frightening subjects.

GRADE SCHOOLERS

All Gold Canyon

Weston Woods, 21 min., grade school

A deserted canyon may seem like a strange place for a reunion, but that's exactly where a prospector meets up with his former partner—right after he has discovered a payload of gold.

By the Sea

Sterling Educational Films, 11 min., grade school

The caprice of a strong wind and wayward kite lead a young boy into new surroundings and adventure.

Children's Key Concert

Public Television Library, 58 min., grade school

Reuben and Dorothy Silver narrate a unique program of music and dance created for children by the Cleveland

Folklore: U.S.A.

Michigan Media, 29 min., grade school

Eight programs that have a lot to say about the American way of story, song, dance and superstition: "Warts, Songs, Jokes," "Custom and Beliefs," "World of Children," "The Instruments," "Folk Song Mirror," "Labor Songs," "Work Songs," "Tales: Tall and Otherwise."

Growing

Britannica Films, 15 min., grade school

Computer technology animates this look at natural technology—the weather and seasonal change.

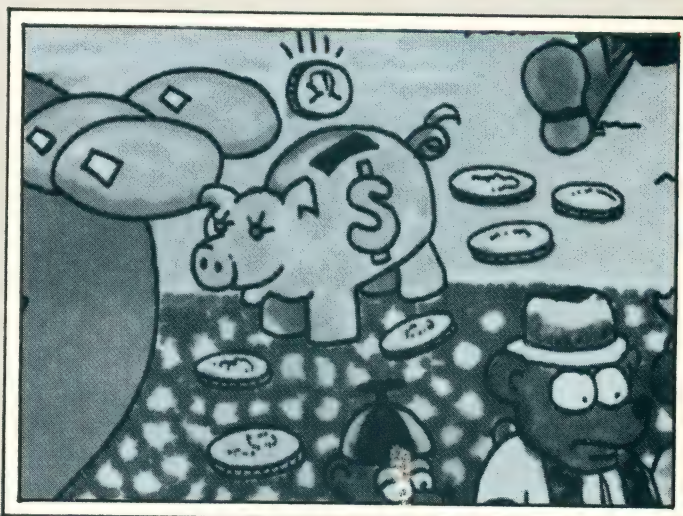
How Far?

Indiana U. AV Center, 10 min., grade school

$E=mc^2$ made simple as the concepts of speed, distance and time are explained through the example of children



Children learn that saving money now means having more money later. They do not know what inflation does to the value of that money.



Orchestra and The Chamber Ballet of the University of Akron.

A Child's Garden of Pollution

Xerox Films, 12 min., grade school

Clean-cut Bill Bixby talks about the messy problem of pollution as he revisits some favorite childhood hangouts.

A Child's Garden of Verses

Sterling Educational Films, 10 min., grade school

Poetry isn't dead, and certainly not the seven Robert Louis Stevenson classics which provide a framework for this film about one day in the life of a small town boy.

Dinosaurs—The Terrible Lizards

AIMS, 10 min., grade school

Children love dinosaurs as near-mythic creatures of fantasy. This film shows a realistic portrayal of their life and extinction.

Dr. Seuss on the Loose

BFA Educational Media, 25 min., grade school

Everyone's favorite pediatrician is in good form in a triad which satirizes the world of attitudes: "The Sneetchers," "Green Eggs and Ham" and "The Zax."

travelling in cars and planes. Mere child's play, right?

How To Lose Your Lunch Money

BFA Educational Media, 4 min., grade school

Illustrated tall-tale of a child's explanation of why his lunch money didn't buy him any lunch. This humorous exercise in creative truth was adapted from a book by Florence White.

In Business For Myself

Films Inc., 10 min., grade school

It is never too soon to teach them how to bring home the bacon. Todd, a toymaker and seller, and Tony, a popcorn vendor, tell their versions of the Horatio Alger story.

A Kite Story

Churchill Films, 25 min., grade school

A fantasy about a young boy's choice between drab and flash as a strange character offers to make him a kite.

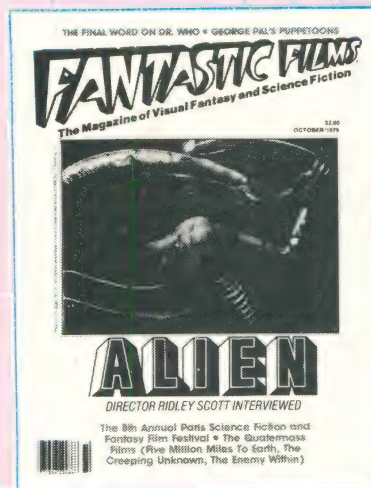
Land of the Friendly Animals

Britannica Films, 11 min., grade school

Charles Darwin caused a great stir when he started in about evolution. This film features the animals of the

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See Page 71 for more information.

Galapagos Archipelago who gave him the idea in the first place.

Mister Rogers Meets An Astronaut

Indiana U. AV Center, 29 min., grade school

A nice program that has Apollo 15 astronaut, Major Alfred Worden, answering questions about space submitted by children. Expect polite questions, not the ones everyone really wants answered.

People Soup

Learning Corp. of America, 12 min., grade school

Director Alan Arkin turns his considerable skills to kids in this comedy of two brothers performing unlikely scientific experiments with things like Bromo Seltzer.

Planning the Use of Money

Sterling Educational Films, 9 min., grade school

Children as well as adults learn that saving money now means having more money later. Of course, they do not tell about what inflation does to the value of that money.

Children's Chants and Games

BFA Educational Media, 15 min., grade school/young adult

This film should surprise some kids who will discover that children in other parts of the country recite familiar chants differently than they do. It may even teach them some new games for when they have to go out and play.

D is Daffodil Yellow

Public Television Library, 29 min., grade school/young adult

The jazz tradition is passed down via the very capable hands of pianist Marian McPartland in performance and with words of encouragement for her youthful audience.

Finding A Friend

AIMS, 11 min., grade school/young adult

This story of a new kid on the block who has some trouble breaking into a clique may help teach children faced with the same problem that bribery is not the answer.

Having trouble telling your kids about the facts of life? About Sex doesn't; it covers everything from sexual fantasies to homosexuality.

Shakespeare: Selection for Children

Sterling Educational Films, 6 min., grade school

Help the kids earn brownie points at school by quoting Shakespeare. Actor Maurice Evans narrates this animated look at the comedies "As You Like It" and "Love's Labour Lost."

The Soap Box Derby Scandal

Weston Woods, 24 min., grade school

An award-winning documentary about the 1973 Soap Box Derby that has a lot of disturbing things to say about winning, losing and cheating. Is nothing sacred?

GRADE SCHOOLERS AND YOUNG ADULTS

About Sex

Texture Films, 23 min., young adult

Have trouble telling your kids about the facts of life? This film doesn't: it covers everything from sexual fantasies to homosexuality and gives the facts about birth control, venereal disease and physical development.

The Best I Can

Films Inc., 12 min., grade school/young adult

A film for aspiring Olympians as Lara, a swimmer, and Marcie, a gymnast, explain the dedication and perspiration required to become an accomplished athlete.

Beware, Beware My Beauty Fair

Phoenix Films, 29 min., grade school/young adult

The Players of the Children's Theatre of Montreal perform a play within a play on film: rehearsals for a school show are dogged by a mysterious backstage menace.

How Much Is Enough?

Sterling Educational Films, 21 min., young adult

The "sphere of radiation" for a sample of uranium is determined through experimentation. In other words, how close can you get to it before you start to grow a third eye?

Island of Dreams: A Fable For Our Time

Texture Films, 10 min.

Animated film in which a bored city dweller finds he can not escape technology even on the island of his dreams. Sounds depressing, but it will probably have little effect on young videophiles.

Poetry for Fun: Dares and Dreams

Centron Films, 13 min., grade school/young adult

A mixture of real life action and animation dramatize six poems including "The Fairies," "The Cave Boy" and "Foul Shot." This should help the kids stay well-versed.

Rookie of the Year

Time Life Multimedia, 47 min., grade school/young adult

Make sure to don the white wigs and black robes for this examination of the question of whether or not a fine girl athlete should be able to play on an all-male little league team.

The Secret Life of T.K. Dearing

Time Life Multimedia, 47 min., young adult

Jodie Foster gets to play a normal kid for a change in this story of a girl who dislikes having her grandfather living with the family until she gets to know him.

Who Are You?

Media Guild, 20 min., grade school/young adult

An interesting and scenic series of seven programs that

show children from different environments, with different heritages, and how these factors shape their attitudes. It takes all kinds to make a world.

FAMILY

Animals, Animals, Animals

Media Guild, 22 min., each

This Emmy Award-winning series starring Hal Linden and Roger Caras explores the animal kingdom in 16 informative programs. Choose any or all of your favorite critters: horse, dolphin, eagle, ape, cat, lion, butterfly, bear, snake, wolf, bee, hound, donkey, pelican, bull and turtle.

Cartoon Carnival #1

Cartoon Carnival #2

Amer Video Tape Library

The old Warner Brothers cartoons never go out of fashion with their kid-pleasing plots and subtle jokes for adults. Carnival #1 features Bugs Bunny, Porky Pig and

FEATURE FILMS

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland

Video Connection; Video Communications; Niles Video, 96 min., 1972

Stars Fiona Fullerton, Michael Crawford, Sir Ralph Richardson and Dame Flora Robson and retells Lewis Carroll's story of a girl who liked to walk through mirrors.

The Bad News Bears

Paramount, 102 min., 1976

Stars Walter Matthau and Tatum O'Neal. Sparkling comedy about a broken-down little league team and their equally broken-down, beer-drinking coach.

Born Free

Columbia; Time Life Multimedia, 95 min., 1966

Virginia McKenna and Bill Travers play the roles of the real life Adamsons in this true story of the challenge of

The Hobbit, J.R.R. Tolkien's amazing fantasy of elves, monsters and, of course, hobbits is reverently told in an animated film featuring the voices of Orson Bean and Hans Conrad.

Daffy Duck. Carnival #2 hums with Merrie Melodies and Children's Fables.

Cartoon Jamboree

Northeast Video & Sound, 50 min.

An era ended when they stopped making cartoons like the ones featured here. Give the kids a chance to see the finest animation money can buy with Popeye, Superman and Felix the Cat classics.

The Family in the Purple House

BFA Educational Media, 13 min.

This film depicts a family, the Morrisises, in an attempt to show that all families are not alike. This could solve the problem of kids who complain about what Johnny's mom lets him do.

Millions and Millions of Bubbles

Churchill Films, 11 min.

No, this is not a Lawrence Welk retrospective. It is an exploration by two children of the unusual treasures to be found at the seashore.

Skateboard

Sports World Cinema, 12 min.

Skateboarding is here to stay, and this film shows why with moves that turn this mutant roller skating into an artform.

setting an orphaned lion, Elsa, free after years of domesticity.

Bullwinkle

Video Communications, 90 min., 1978

Bullwinkle, Rocky the Flying Squirrel and friends get together for a full-length, lunatic romp.

A Christmas Carol

Video Communications, 86 min., 1951

This dramatic version of Dickens' story, starring Alastair Sim and Kathleen Harrison, has perhaps the most pitiful Tiny Tim of all the screen versions.

The Hobbit

Xerox Films, 78 min., 1978

J.R.R. Tolkien's amazing fantasy of elves, monsters and, of course, hobbits is reverently told in this animated film featuring the voices of Orson Bean and Hans Conrad.

Jaws II

MCA DiscoVision, MCA Videocassettes, 124 min., 1975/young adult

The giant shark rises again for a second helping. Grade A fright factor.

Mysterious Island

Columbia Pictures Home Entertainment, 101 min., 1961

A great adventure story that has giant birds, crabs and

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lizards terrorizing some escaped convicts and a couple of scantily-clad women.

Oliver

Time Life Video, 145 min., 1968

Academy Award-winning musical adaptation of Dickens' *Oliver Twist* features everyone's favorite orphan, Mark Lester, and the most energetic Fagin to date as portrayed by Ron Moody.

Sound of Music

Magnetic Video, 174 min., 1965

This long, visually stunning film milks Julie Andrews for every octave she is worth.

Tom Sawyer

MCA Discovision, MCA Videocassettes, 76 min., 1973

Jane Wyatt, Buddy Ebsen, Vic Morrow and John McGiver star in a good version of Mark Twain's adventure

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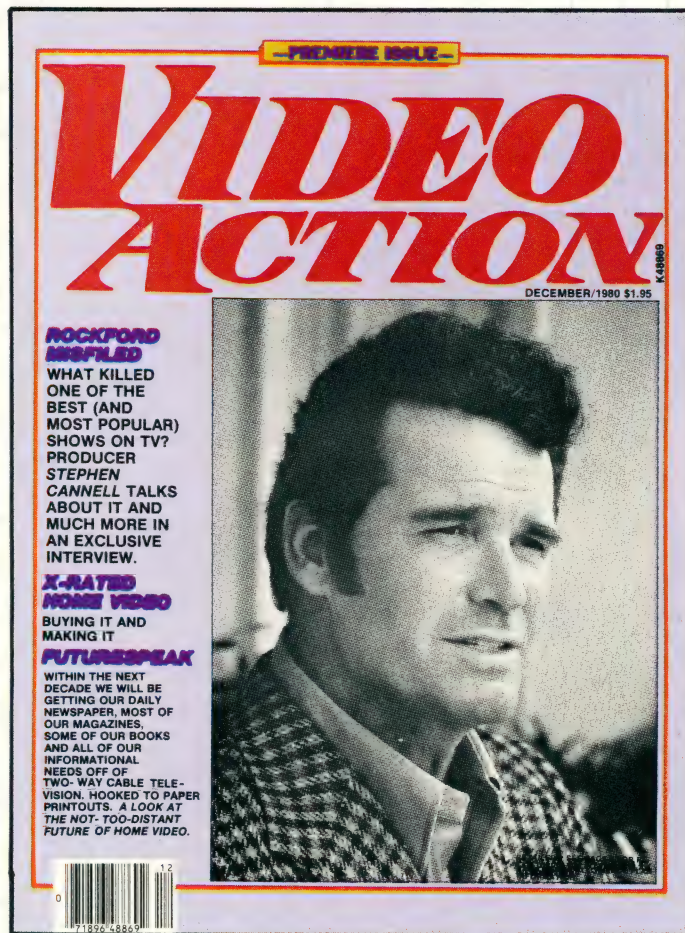
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T.V. is more than just entertainment. Medical information, daily food cost comparisons, computer checking and bank transactions right to your television screen, newspapers over the air, updated constantly ... today's video world is a whole lot more than just major motion pictures.



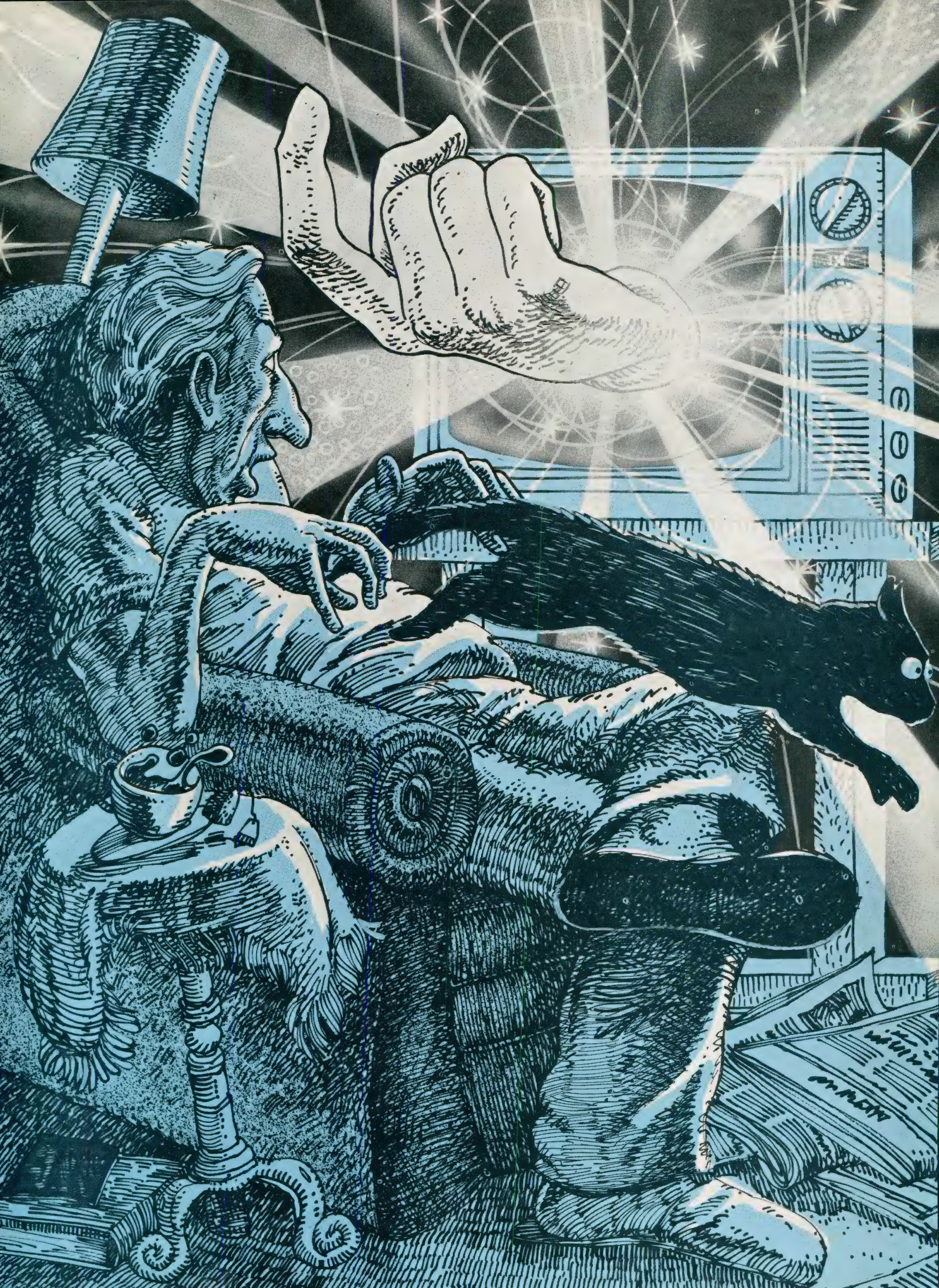
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THE BIGGEST (LITTLE) ENCYCLOPEDIA IN THE WORLD

Teletext Part II—Prestel: the Slumbering Giant

SERIES by Richard Burton

AROUND 10:15 PM ON MOST ANY WEEKNIGHT IN THE spring of 1980, the average British TV viewer, dozing in his or her armchair, might be aroused from slumber by something curious happening on the TV screen.

A green hand is beckoning to them with an animated finger to come closer. Abruptly the hand vanishes, replaced by a rapidly forming sequence of letters. To the accompaniment of *Star Wars*-type electronic beeps and tones, a sentence is completed. "Hello! It's me again, Prestel" it says in a friendly manner. "Let me show you what I can do," says another quickly formed sentence.

The viewer, curiosity aroused, is then treated to a kaleidoscope of dozens of multi-colored pages of information on a multitude of subjects whilst, in the background, Strauss' Blue Danube Waltz plays, evoking more stirring high-technology images, this time of Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey*.

After nearly two minutes—an entire commercial break—the cacophony of sight and sound ends with a cheery farewell and promise of further contacts from several brief sentences. The sequence ends, as it began, with the green hand, this time waving goodbye to its somewhat amazed audience.

This television commercial—for such it was—and several others like it, form just one phase in a \$1,500,000 advertising campaign launched by Britain's Post Office telecommunica-

tions division to herald the arrival of its latest consumer service. This service is a new visual information system that utilizes the domestic television

***Prestel
currently has a
capacity of a
quarter of a
million pages***

set. The service answers to the name of Prestel.

In the last issue of *Video Action*, I examined Ceefax and Oracle, two other visual information systems available on slightly modified domestic television receivers. Therefore there must be some understandably puzzled faces amongst you trying to work out why an island kingdom like Great Britain needs a third system to compete for a still largely unknown market. Add to that puzzlement, if you will, why so much money is being spent to inform the British public of Prestel's arrival and why this arrival has sent so many important companies rushing to the Post Office's door

with desperate pleas to be let into Prestel on the ground floor.

Part of the answer lies in terminology. Ceefax and Oracle come under the generic name of "teletext," i.e., broadcast video information systems, transmitted with regular TV signals directly to the viewer's set. Prestel is different. Prestel enjoys the label of "viewdata" because it is an interactive system—it is transmitted along existing telephone lines to the user's home or office. Once there, it is channelled to a specially adapted TV set where any of its pages of information can be called up and displayed on the screen with the aid of a remote control keypad.

Another part of the answer lies in capacity. Because of their broadcast nature, teletext systems are currently restricted to a maximum of 400 pages of information (any more and the wait time for pages to appear on the screen becomes impractical). Prestel currently has a capacity of a quarter of a million pages (of which 156,465 are in use) with an expected half million to be available within two years. Because a computer is at the heart of the Prestel system, any one of these pages is available to the Prestel user almost instantly.

And perhaps the final part of the answer lies in the way Prestel is operated. Ceefax and Oracle are run by Britain's two television networks, BBC and ITV respectively. Each system has its own staff who collect and

collate all the information put out in the systems' pages. Prestel is, basically, a computer owned and run by the Post Office. Space, or pages, in that computer are available to anyone who cares to buy them. Therefore, Prestel's information comes from many varied outside sources, all coming together to form a massive pool of information which makes Prestel the most formidable force in the rapidly-developing videotext industry.

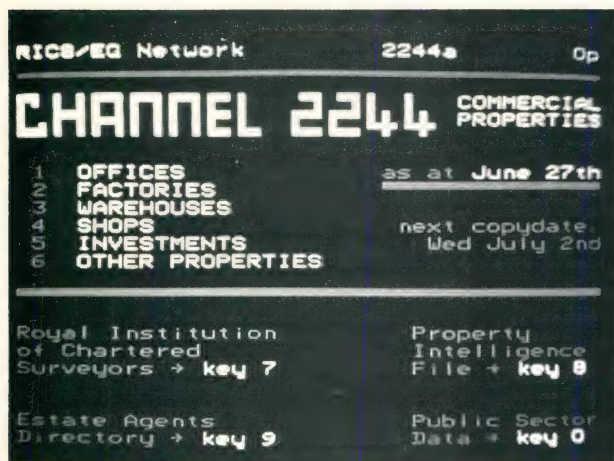
Despite imaginative marketing techniques and the undercurrent of excitement generated in the commercial sector, Prestel is off to a slow start as far as the Great British Public

benefits will far outweigh its disadvantages, and this optimistic attitude is shared by the set manufacturers. ITT predicts that 80,000 sets will be in use by the end of 1983. Prices should drop as technology improves and one manufacturer hopes that in six months to a year a Prestel set should cost no more than \$300 more than a standard TV receiver.

Prestel relies for its existence on the activities of four groups: (1) the Post Office, which in England owns the computer and the phone lines which carry the information to the users, (2) the manufacturers, who make the terminals through which the user gets the information, (3) the

infinitely cheaper to maintain their sales lists, service details, stock lists, and the like on Prestel than to produce "hard copy" versions at ever escalating prices. On Prestel it will cost a mere \$10,000 per year to maintain a 200-page video magazine or information service. Cheap, compared to paper prices.

Prestel is also fast. Data can constantly be updated—by the minute if need be. One of the first groups of IPs to realize this potential was the travel industry, who found that fast-selling items like holiday bookings and flights could be taken out of their pages in the system the minute they were sold. Likewise, employment



At right, Prestel information receivers can be an invaluable asset to the enterprising businessman and an obvious aid in executive decision making. At left, a sample Prestel "page" appears on a TV screen with information which may be the key to success for English entrepreneurs.



is concerned.

As of mid-1980 only 3,188 Prestel-adapted sets were actually in use. This could be ascribed to traditional wariness on the part of the public to anything new, but a lot must have to do with availability. Prestel sets cost over \$2,000 at present and installation is not an easy matter. The customer must buy or rent his set and then apply to the Post Office to have it connected to his telephone line—a process that can take some time as anyone who has waited to have a telephone installed can testify!

Once the set is installed and properly connected, the user must accept that it is still going to cost him money. Each time the Prestel system is used, the user's phone is also tied up, the call charges going on his bill. Not only that, but some pages called up may carry a charge for usage (this is at the discretion of the information provider)—this also is automatically added to the telephone bill.

However, all those concerned with Prestel are sure that the system's

rental companies, who get the majority of the sets into the homes and offices of the users, and, most important of all, (4) the IPs. The IPs are the Information Providers, who actually supply the information the system is based on.

An IP can be any individual or group of individuals, any company or organization who rents space in the Prestel system. More and more IPs are being created every day, so much so that The Association of Viewdata Information Providers has been formed. Its members range from those with 100 pages or less rented in the system to those with over 5,000.

Special IP groups—called Closed User Groups—have been formed who restrict access to their material to known groups of people or organizations. Prestel has the capability to isolate blocks of pages from the main system and make them available only to the holders of a special key code.

In effect, what Prestel has done is create a whole new publishing medium—an electronic medium. IPs find it

agencies found this feature of Prestel to be perfectly suited for them. Several executive employment agencies are major IPs. They can advertise jobs, fill them and have new vacancies inserted in their pages in minutes rather than days.

As mentioned earlier, an IP can get a return on his investment in Prestel by charging the user for utilizing his service—although this is discretionary and most major Prestel IPs provide their pages to the users free of charge. If a charge is to be made for a page or series of pages, the amount is displayed at the top of the page and credited automatically to the user's bill.

Though perhaps not thought of as such by the user, this very capability of Prestel is one of its major attractions to IPs. Due to its very nature as an interactive system, Prestel can "watch" its users and provide IPs with a constant record of how many people use their services. Naturally enough, this can work both ways and Prestel users will soon have the facility of

"talking" directly to the Prestel computer via their remote control keypads enabling them to obtain all sorts of goods and services directly from the IPs' pages.

A household with a Prestel-equipped TV set quite literally has the key to a store of information of astounding proportions. Not since William Caxton invented the printing press has such a development had the potential to alter how the British receive or seek information in the years to come.

Prestel's massive capacity means that it can cater to almost every facet of life.

In education: some universities

smoking, immunizations and influenza are just some subjects it covers on its Prestel pages.

In choosing a career: Prestel has several career information services. Key 277 for Careerdata, which provides current vacancy information to graduates, school-leavers and job changers.

In consumer goods: you have the pick of the big chain stores in the British Isles. 20100 brings you Great Universal Mail Order's 24,000 item home shopping catalogue.

In entertainment: with nearly every major publisher in Great Britain now a Prestel IP, the information available on theatre, music, art, film, ballet,

is currently a national information system. Information peculiar to just, say, London is equally available to users in Scotland, and vice versa. Prestel and its two predecessors will really come into their own when regional services can be put into operation, serving smaller areas and communities.

As of this writing, Prestel has computer centers in London, Birmingham, Nottingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Norwich, Glasgow and Edinburgh. But these only serve to feed data from IPs in those areas into the main Prestel network, as well as servicing users in those areas.

Many intriguing developments are



At left, a Prestel receiver in the home can be as valuable as one at the office. Social activities can be planned ahead for convenience and enjoyment with the use of listed readouts for restaurants, theaters, etc. At right, a sample restaurant listing is displayed on a Prestel screen.

have already begun to store complete books in the system. These books are available to scholars all over the country at the press of a button. Punch in the number 289, for example, and you have a 10,000 article encyclopedia to learn from.

In business: separate services cater to all corporate, financial, economic and commercial users. Key in 248 for Fintel, the businessmen's service utilizing the resources of The Financial Times.

In leisure: it would be easier to list what Prestel doesn't cater to! You can do anything from playing one of Prestel's video games to planning a trip around the world. 269 will bring into your home the services of American Express. 500 will call up Pan Am's pages.

In sport: a full sports service is a regular feature of Prestel. 207 will even enable you to place a bet with Mecca Bookmakers.

In health: 544 is the number of the Health Education Council. Information on infant feeding, how to stop

opera, concerts, etc., has to be the most comprehensive ever gathered in one place. 441 calls up the pages of *Time Out*, the respected where-to-go and what-to-do guide for London.

The list just goes on and on. Prestel is even spawning its own electronic publications. UpDate 245 is a fortnightly magazine produced exclusively for the Prestel system containing a mixture of news, comment, letters and opinion. Viewtel 202 claims to be the World's First Electronic Newspaper and carries news as well as offering advertising space.

All of this—and so much more—is available right now in Britain.

The only cloud on an otherwise bright horizon is the as yet unanswered question as to whether the public will take to acquiring its information this way when it is still available at a vastly reduced rate from all the books and magazines that Prestel's IPs still produce. Only time, and a great deal of money spent on PR campaigns, will tell.

As with Ceefax and Oracle, Prestel

hinted at for the near future. Aside from the aforementioned two-way facility between user and IP, Prestel will soon be capable of providing personal communication between individuals. Users will be able to use the system to leave messages or transmit data to other users. The message can be fed into the system and retrieved at any time by the recipient who merely has to key in a special code.

"Picture Prestel" is yet another development promised in about eight years. Quite what this will consist of has not yet been made clear and presumably still comes under the heading of "classified."

Prestel is destined to play an important role in the coming information revolution that is bound to touch all our lives, both as itself and as a model on which other viewdata systems will be based.

It is for this reason that my examination of the "Slumbering Giant" will continue in *Video Action* next month as I examine further implications of the system both here and abroad. ■



PHOTO CREDIT: ELLIOT FINE

THE PRESERVATION OF YESTERYEAR

A Look at New York City's Unique MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING

ART, LIKE BEAUTY, IS IN THE eye of the beholder. It has long been the lament of video viewers that the art of television is all too fleeting to behold. The images flash by, each a minute part of the whole, each adding to the total entity known as the television program. Until recently, the only place for the public to preserve an individual favorite program was deep within the oft-times faulty memories of the viewer.

With the wide-spread use of private video tape machines, the initial problem seems to have been solved. Favorite shows are fast finding their way into private collections. But video collectors quickly discover another problem.

If seen at all, the old shows of television's so-called "Golden Age" are regulated to the oddest of late-night hours. And some classic shows of yesteryear are never rerun in any time-slot at all.

But there is hope. There is really no need to despair or to fear over an exceptional television presentation be-

ing broadcast and then fading into space forever. For there is a unique institution in New York City whose sole reason for existence is the preservation of yesteryear. It is the unique Museum of Broadcasting.

In the mid-60s, William S. Paley, the

***There are over
2,000 programs
now in their
collection, and
the number is
growing every
day.***

Chairman of the Board of CBS Inc. began an extensive study across the country to see if there was a need or a desire for such a museum to exist. The field studies conducted also attempted to determine just how much classic broadcast material was still in

existence and in exactly what form it existed.

To the delight of those doing the studies, they discovered quite a bit more material was preserved than previously believed. The many horror stories about the classic shows having been accidentally destroyed proved to be, more often than not, unfounded.

It was also discovered that historians and scholars, as well as the general public, favored a museum-type institution rather than a private archive.

When the collection of broadcast material actually began, the organization that was to become the Museum of Broadcasting soon found that not only were the three major networks, as well as PBS, more than willing to turn over tapes and kinescopes, but private collectors, actors, technicians and many others who had access to old programs were eager to offer their private collections.

In November of 1976, the Museum of Broadcasting was finally opened to

the public. Housed in a building on New York's East 53rd Street off 5th Avenue, they leased two floors for the public and an additional one for storage. The library was equipped with a card catalogue of over 4,000 cross-referenced television and radio programs, all available to the public.

A special study center was opened at the same time, consisting of 26 specially-designed consoles wherein visitors of the Museum could not only view and play back tapes of any program selected from the card catalogue, but listen to any of the thousands of hours of radio programs as well.

The response to the Museum was immediate and spectacular. Opening their doors at noon on Tuesdays through Saturdays, the employees of the Museum soon discovered long lunch hour lines curled around the corner of 5th and 53rd full of eager patrons who wished to conduct research, catch a missed broadcast or to relive a favorite hour of viewing from years gone by.

They did little advertising. The few short television commercials that were broadcast were donated by the networks or PBS. The popularity of the Museum and its facilities mainly grew by word-of-mouth. By canvassing information from the numerous patrons, the curators selected further popular entertainment programs as well as many news and cultural television events for inclusion in its vast collection that spans the 50 year history of American broadcasting.

The Museum actually maintains two separate collections. A $\frac{3}{4}$ " video-cassette is first made for preservation in the archives. From this, an additional $\frac{1}{2}$ " cassette is made for public viewing. The public collection is for viewing only; tapes cannot be lent out or duplicated.

The major networks have contractual agreements for 300 broadcasting hours to be donated to the Museum each calendar year. But more often than not, the actual amount of programming donated far exceeds that which is promised under contract. For example, ABC contributed all 52 hours of the 1980 Winter Olympics—this in addition to the hours under contract.

There are over 2,000 programs now in their collection, and that number is growing every day. The majority of programming is from the networks, but there are selections from the Public Broadcasting System as well. The Museum attempts to select the most representative episodes from the more highly-rated, popular pro-



The Museum is a melting pot of the educational, the entertaining, the good, the bad and the mediocre.



grams. The usual practice is to have on file the premiere and the final episodes of such shows as *I Love Lucy*, *My Three Sons*, *Leave It To Beaver*, *Studio One*, *Playhouse 90*, *The Fugitive*, and *60 Minutes*.

Major political events such as the election year conventions, the 1960 Kennedy/Nixon debates and most of the extensive coverage by Walter Cronkite of the Watergate break-in of October, 1972, are well represented.

The space program is fully documented in the Museum collection; the moon landing and many of the exciting events leading to the Apollo missions can be viewed over and over at

one of their two study centers.

Although the Museum's stated function is the preservation of American broadcasting, they also have representative episodes of the 120 British programs that are seen in the United States. *Ascent of Man* and even the outrageous *Monty Python's Flying Circus* can be seen. A certain number of selected programs from other countries is also preserved within their archives.

Another unique feature of the Museum is a collection of "broadcast days." Every eight months, the library receives a tape of the complete daily broadcasting schedule of a selected network affiliate, from the morning sermonette to the closing national anthem—including commercials! Stations are alternated by network and geographic location.

Because of the wide range of services and programs—and due to the resulting public acceptance—the Museum recently has been able to enjoy a massive expansion and now comes close to achieving the functions that were originally perceived by its founders.

Behind a newly designed glass front, one enters the lobby of the Museum of Broadcasting where a large color television console plays a video tape, usually showcasing a program currently being featured in one of their many and varied public broadcast retrospective series.

At the reception desk, patrons can pick up some of the literature concerning "Open Channels," "Themes and Variations," or some of the other features that the Museum offers. Memberships and information concerning lecture series can also be obtained at the reception desk.

Just beyond the desk and up a rather futuristic ramp, the new video theater can be found. It is at this new facility where much of the new noon-time crowd can be located. One of the newest programs the Museum now offers is the "Themes and Variations" series shown on the 12-foot video screen in the MB Theater.

Each week, the lunchtime patrons are treated to such diverse entertainment as reruns of *Your Show of Shows* with Sid Caesar and Imogene Coca, or *The Ernie Kovacs Show*, or *I Love Lucy*, as was the case recently when the theme for the MB Theater was the classic comedy series of the 50s.

A donation of \$1.50 is requested for attendance at the MB Theater, and no one has balked yet.

In front of the reception desk is a pair of elevators that will take patrons

(continued on page 78)

You know the feeling by now. You are walking through the shopping mall in Anytown, U.S.A. when suddenly you come across the Game Room—a vast arcade chock full of blinking, buzzing and booming pin-ball and electronic games. Your mouth goes dry, your palms begin to sweat and, quite involuntarily, your hand reaches into your pocket in a desperate dig for loose quarters. It's game time, folks.

You push your way into the crowded arcade, eyes casting about for the game that will win your attention. Naturally, all the best ones, the ones you need to play are at least five deep in waiting electronic gladiators, but no matter—there is plenty to go around.

Of course, there is always the problem of change. You never seem to have enough quarters to drop into the slot. Want to bet that the change machine will be empty when you need it most?

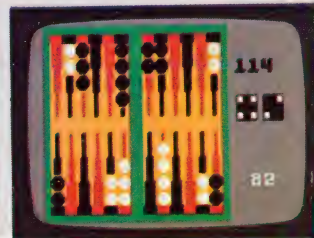
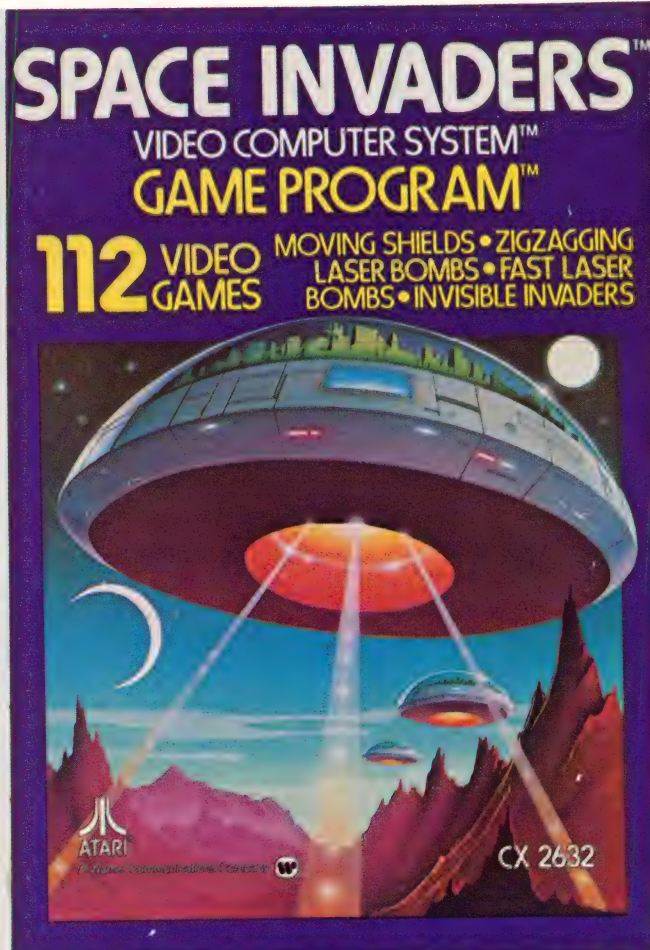
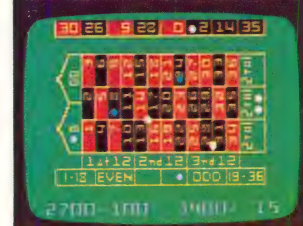
Well, the true arcade fanatic finally can stop worrying. No longer will he or she be turnded by the many and varied problems that traditionally plague the arcade regular. Now you can play all the games you have ever wanted—and then some—right at home thanks to the recent proliferation of home video computer systems offered by any number of electronics companies. All that is needed is your television set—color, preferably—a home computer unit and any one of several score of pre-programmed game cartridges currently on the market. And, in many cases, even a TV set is not necessary since there are dozens of games available in all their micro-chipped, hand-held self-contained splendor.

What began about five years ago with the simplest kind of game that involved batting an electronic blip back and forth across the screen has evolved into something that is quite amazing—even in light of today's technology. In fact, if *Pong* was the first generation of electronic video games, then by now we have reached a least the fifth generation. The way they have been evolving, even the sophisticated, complex games available today will seem crude compared to what we can expect five years from now.

This guide to home video games is by no means complete, but in it we will attempt to list the best and most innovative (in our opinion) of those currently available, both hand-held and otherwise. Prices, when noted, are those suggested by the manufacturers. Unless otherwise indicated, the games require a computer hook-

The VIDEO ACTION Video C

Part One in a Series by

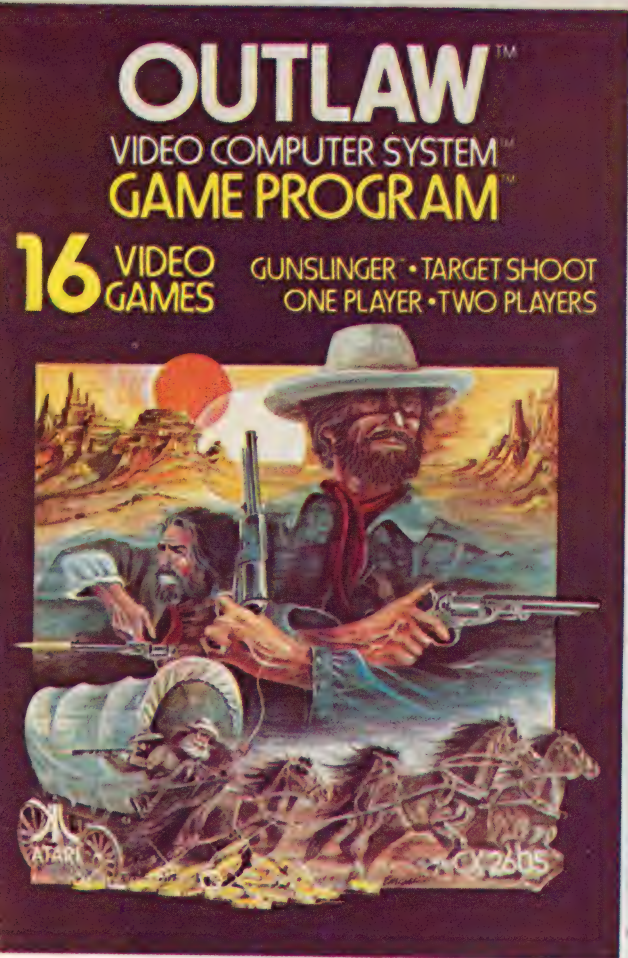
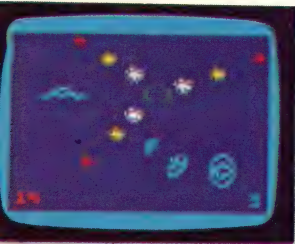


Home video games this page, counterclockwise: MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL by Mattel, SKIING by Mattel, HORSERACING by Mattel, CHECKERS by Mattel, ROULETTE by Mattel, BOXING by Mattel, BACKGAMMON by Mattel, SPACE INVADERS by Atari.

But Can You Pay For

N Guide to Home Games

PAUL KUPPERBERG



up with your television set. Naturally, each company manufactures its own computer and no two systems are in any way, shape, or form compatible with one another.

ADVENTURE

(Atari, \$29.95): One of the newer home video games, *Adventure* sends you on a quest for an enchanted goblet, making you a sort of electronic Sir Lancelot. You, the player, are given a magic sword with which you will be able to get past a trio of nasty dragons waiting to make you tonight's main course, and across a bridge where the enchanted goblet awaits rescue. There are, of course, other difficulties placed in your way. After all, what are a few dragons when there is the Holy Grail to save?

AIR-SEA BATTLE

(Atari, \$21.95): For those of us who miss a good war every now and then, there is *Air-Sea Battle*, with 27 different ways to shoot things out of the sky and blow other things up in the water. Anti-aircraft guns, torpedoes, Polaris missiles and bombs are under your control, enabling you to engage in every conceivable type of land, sea and air battle. And for those conscientious objectors in the audience, *Air-Sea Battle* also comes with a trio of selections that allow you to shoot at rabbits, ducks and clowns (clowns?) moving across the screen in shooting gallery fashion. Now you can show Emmett Kelley what you really thought of him.

AMAZIN' MAZE

(Bally, \$21.95): *Amazin' Maze* is just what it sounds like—a computer generated maze through which one or two players must maneuver their playing pieces. Chances are you will never get to see all the maze combinations the computer is capable of conjuring from its memory bank, but that is all right. You will undoubtedly be kept amply busy by this baffler. And always keep in mind that in games which are played against the computer itself, winning is always in the machine's favor.

ARMOR BATTLE

(Mattel, \$29.95): War may be hell, but after sports and outer space, it seems to be the home video field's biggest seller. *Armor Battle* pits you, as a tank commander, against the enemy, the computer-controlled tank. The objective is to blow up the computer's tank with yours, all the while avoiding the landmines which can send you back to where you

Home video games this page, clockwise: SPACE BATTLE by Mattel, NBA BASKETBALL by Mattel, NFL FOOTBALL by Mattel, NHL HOCKEY by Mattel, SEA BATTLE by Mattel, ARMOR BATTLE by Mattel, POKER & BLACK JACK by Mattel, OUTLAW by Atari.

Them With Quarters?



Even rainy days can't stop the action in Atari's new CHAMPIONSHIP SOCCER™ game which features the new "scrolling," playing field.

started. Tactics is the name of this game and, along with hundreds of possible terrains on which you can do battle, *Armor Battle* has all the sound effects you loved so much in *World War II*.

BACKGAMMON

(Mattel, \$29.95): Be you novice or champion, Mattel's video version of backgammon is for you. Complete with everything found on the ages old board game—including die and doubling cube—*Backgammon* performs at different levels depending on your playing skill. So throw away that dusty old board... the miracle of modern micro-processors makes cardboard and plastic playing chips obsolete.

BANK SHOT

(Parker Brothers, hand-held, \$50.00): Stand aside, Minnesota Fats... Parker Brothers' hand-held *Bank Shot* is in town! Unlike the early models of hand-held computer games that merely played musical tones or flashed colorful lights, *Bank Shot* is three games in one, *Straight Pool* (for one or two players), *Poison Pool* and *Trick Shots*. This unit allows you all the control over your "cueball"



Mattel Electronics introduces BASKETBALL 2, the new advanced version of its original, highly popular Basketball electronic game.

as does real pool, including trick shots and the ever popular eight-ball in the side pocket. It is the perfect game to help keep dad out of the poolhall at night.

BASKETBALL 2

(Mattel, hand-held, \$29.95): Mattel is already into its second generation of hand-held games in its quest to keep up with the rule changes. *Basketball 2* offers several new options, including the three-point play, fouls and foul shots, three different computer-controlled defensive options and two offensive players with the capability to pass the ball between them as they charge down court. You can also feint, fake and dribble to your heart's content while the computer keeps track of playing time and scores. *Basketball 2* also features authentic simulations of game sounds—you know, the little whistles, bleeps and buzzes that never fail to keep your neighbors awake on long plane trips.

BLACK JACK

(Atari, \$21.95): If you think Vegas is too gaudy and Atlantic City too tacky, you might want to give *Black Jack* a try. Based on the traditional game of blackjack or 21, the Atari home video version allows one, two or three players (provided, that is, you have a third set of controls on your computer) to compete. Each player is given 200

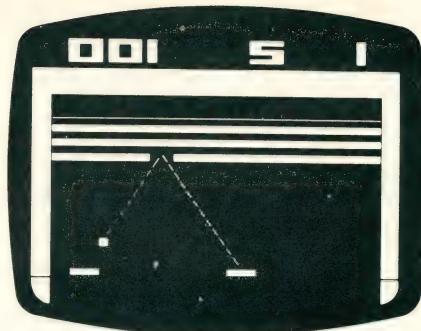
"chips" to gamble with by the machine and it deals the cards in random sequence, just like the croupiers in the casinos. But this is better—you don't have to tip the computer when you cash in.

BREAKOUT

(Atari, \$21.95): Miss the excitement and challenge of breaking out of the Big House? Have we got a game for you! *Breakout's* 36 variations put you in a prison from which you have to escape, fighting time, gravity, invisible bricks and an unpredictable "ball" all the way. The remaining dozen games on the cartridge go under the label *Breakthru*, which is simply more knocking through "walls" with an electronic blip.

CASINO

(Atari, \$29.95): With a resounding cry of "Full house, kings high!" you plug the *Casino* cartridge into your Atari home video computer. All that is required of the player is a little bit of thought: it deals the cards and keeps track of the bets while you indulge in some blackjack, stud poker or poker solitaire. The latter mode is rather interesting in that you can play up to 12 hands against yourself. In the others, up to four players can be dealt in. Still, we kind of miss the feeling of satisfaction that comes with raking in the piles of winnings after each hand.



BREAKOUT™ Game Program™

CODEBREAKER

(Atari, \$21.95): Be the first kid on your block to crack the Japanese code! The computer selects a code from the several thousand programmed into it and, in the fewest number of moves, you are supposed to deduce the code through a series of logical guesses. *Codebreaker* contains a dozen different ways to do this. *Nim*, a mathematical game, makes up the remaining eight variations on the cart.

COMBAT

(Atari, \$21.95): Guaranteed to promote peaceful relations as you and an opponent blast the hell out of one another with tanks, missiles, bullets, and airplanes. You can engage in several dozen modes of battle with *Combat*, driving your tanks through mazes or zipping your planes into the protective cover of clouds.

FLASH GORDON

(Mattel, hand-held, \$27.50): All new and all cosmic, man. You control Flash's spacecraft and match wits with the computerized minions of the evil Ming the Merciless who, oddly enough, are trying to kill you. You arm and fire laser missiles as the unit keeps score and makes the usual sounds—including (are you ready for this) the sounding of "Taps" if one of the invaders gets by you.

FOOTBALL 2

(Mattel, hand-held, \$40.00): After listening to the sound effects tweeted from this hand-held unit, one begins to think maybe Howard Cosell isn't so bad after all. Still, for a basic hand-held electronic game, Mattel's *Football 2* is fairly impressive. Read-outs keep the player informed of his/her down, field position and time remaining and yards to go for the defense/computer. The player is given much more control over the ball as well, allowing him to drop back, pass, scramble and all kinds of football player things.

GIN

(Mattel, hand-held, \$65.00): People are gradually loosing the ability to do things when they play games, but, while Mattel's hand-held *Gin* computer game shuffles, deals and scores, at least it allows us to think, matching our wits against its beginning or advanced modes of difficulty. The screen lights up with messages that keep you informed of the computer's play. You can also call up the machine's hand on the screen after each found of play.

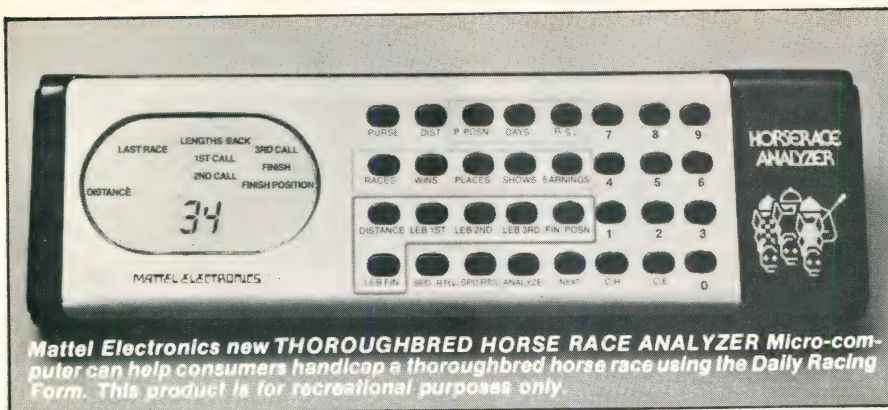
HANGMAN

(Atari, \$21.95): Why anybody would need a computer to play this of all games is beyond me. *Hangman* is a home video-version of the old kid's game where you have to guess a word letter-by-letter while your opponent draws a part of a hanging man for each wrong guess until the figure is complete. A paper and pencil are a lot cheaper and just as easy. *Hangman* is programmed with third, sixth, ninth and twelfth grade level vocabularies.

HORSE RACING

(Mattel, \$29.95): This one is not only fun, but cute as well. The screen lights up with a colorful electronically produced racetrack, complete with rail and fieldhouse, on which little horse-shaped blips race. The computer gives you a tout sheet listing the field so you can handicap and bet on the race. It even gives you odds on the runners. All this game needs to be absolutely authentic is some drunk who





Mattel Electronics new THOROUGHbred HORSE RACE ANALYZER Micro-computer can help consumers handicap a thoroughbred horse race using the Daily Racing Form. This product is for recreational purposes only.

will spill his beer on you and tiny little electronic riding crops that the tiny little electronic jockeys can hit the tiny little electronic horses with.

HORSE RACE ANALYZER

(Mattel, hand-held, \$125.00): Though not strictly an electronic game, Mattel's *Horse Race Analyzer* is an interesting little toy for those pony-players among us. Statistics on all the entrants in a race are fed into the computer after which it gives you the best four horses in that race. Mattel claims that the *Analyzer* had a 60% success rate at picking horses that came in on the money in a limited test of over 1,000 horses. Still, it has got to be better than betting on a filly simply because it has the same name as your mother-in-law.

MAJOR LEAGUE BASEBALL

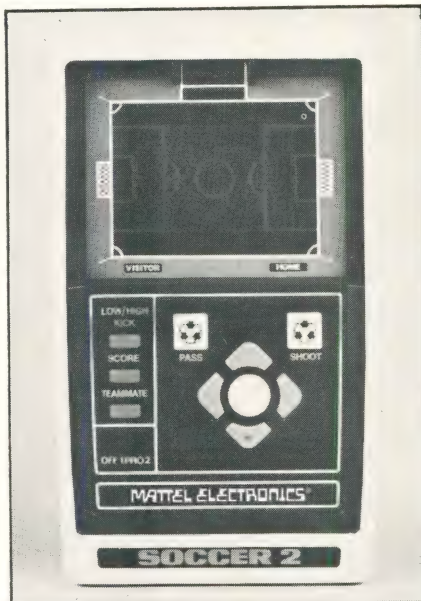
(Mattel, \$29.95): Not only do you get two regulation teams competing in the great American pastime right on your television screen in glorious computerized colors, but Mattel's *Major League Baseball* gives you the roar of the crowd as well. And don't worry if your game goes into extra innings... this game can do it without even warming up its memory bank.

MERLIN

(Parker Brothers, hand-held, \$34.00): One of the first of the new-wave of hand-held electronic games, Parker Brothers' *Merlin* gives the player six games within a game, balancing the elements of logic, skill, memory and strategy.

NASL SOCCER

(Mattel, \$29.95): Soccer is just beginning to make it big in this country and that means home video soccer is destined to be boffo at the b.o. as well. Mattel's *NASL Soccer* is a simple but effective version of the sport and, thanks to the Mattel Intellivision home video computer's superior Object Control Disk, the player has much greater control over his/her player's movements across the playing field. This is truly the dawning of the age of the Armchair Pele.



SOCCER 2—Mattel Electronics introduces a new sophisticated and professional version of its original Soccer game. Soccer 2 permits the player to control two offensive players, includes the ability to score or pass with high and low kicks, and allows for loose balls, interceptions, throw-ins and corner shots.



NBA BASKETBALL

(Mattel, \$29.95): You don't have to be tall to play on an NBA team anymore—provided, of course, you get Mattel's *NBA Basketball* home video game. Do everything the big guys do: run, pass, dribble, jump, take rebounds and set-shots as the computer keeps score during the four periods of play. In fact, the only difference between Doctor J and you is his salary.

NFL FOOTBALL

(Mattel, \$29.95): Yet another electronic recreation of a favorite sport. You can play against another person or the computer. *NFL Football* allows you to be on either offense or defense and you can punt, pass and run while the computer displays the time and vital play statistics, such as yardage and downs.

NHL HOCKEY

(Mattel, \$29.95): I don't know if *NHL Hockey* is as true to life as it could be—after all, it is not programmed for little electronic fights on the ice! Still, if you are hot for some ice-action, *NHL Hockey* with its two teams of players, score and time keeping read-outs, penalty box and various cheers, buzzers and whistles is just the game for you.

OUTLAW

(Atari, \$21.95): No beating around the bush on this one—Atari's *Outlaw* is a phenomenal game. Game selections one through 12 give you different variations on *Gunslinger*, which pits you and your opponent, both in

VIDEO COMPUTER SYSTEM™ BY ATARI®



The full line of Atari video games numbers in the dozens, some of which (such as *Space Invaders*) feature over 100 variations per individual game.

the guise of cowboy-blips, against one another in shoot-outs. Various games ration your bullets, allow the bullets to rebound, place moving or stationary obstacles in your path, or generally just make things difficult for you.

Four variations of *Target Shooting* are also on the cartridge. But the best thing about *Outlaw* is the cute little cowboys who kneel to fire their pistols to the accompaniment of some of the neatest sound effects on any electronic game.

PANZAR ATTACK

(Bally, \$26.95): It's as if Field Marshall Rommel were still alive and acting as a consultant to the home video software programmers. *Panzar Attack* pits your tanks against an opponent's tanks while running through a maze of obstacles.

PGA GOLF

(Mattel, \$29.95): If nothing else, *PGA Golf* has an interesting playing

field, simulated to look like a golf course with different colored areas representing fairways, bunkers and ruffs. A little electronic golfer-blip in the lower corner of the screen tees-off while readouts keep you advised of wind direction and velocity, distances, pars, club selection, shot direction and scores. With this, you never have to get blisters again.

RED BARON

(Bally, \$26.95): No, you don't get to square off against Snoopy in this video game, but you do get to fly your planes all over the screen while trying to shoot down your opponent. On second thought, with all the dog-fighting going on in *Red Baron*, maybe Snoopy *should* be included.

SEA BATTLE

(Mattel, \$29.95): Better batten down your hatches, matey. The big battle for supremacy of the seas is here. Played on oceanic maps that are randomly generated by the com-

puter, *Sea Battle* allows you to sink opposing ships, lay siege to land masses and cut the enemy's supply lines.

SEA WOLF

(Bally, \$21.95): More of the same, except *Sea Wolf* comes with submarines that torpedo ships on the surface and you never know where a mine is going to pop up.

SOCCER 2

(Mattel, hand-held, \$40.00): Another surprisingly complete recreation of a big-time sport. Besides containing options that allow you to pass, make high or low kicks and create realistic soccer situations, *Soccer 2* can be played on any one of four levels of skill and complexity.

SPACE BATTLE

(Mattel, \$29.95): Now this one has some great graphics and nice sound effects. The computer-controlled

alien invaders are after your command ship, see, and you have to blast them to space dust before they can do it to you. *Space Battle* comes complete with a situation map you can flash on the screen to show how you are faring as well as a close-up of the cockpit, from which you fire your lasers.

SPACE INVADERS

(Atari, \$29.95): Ah, the penultimate outer space video game. *Space Invaders* has inspired both a song extolling its particularly addictive nature as well as a home video version. Now, instead of dropping quarter after quarter into the slot all you need do is hit the reset button and you can play *Space Invaders* in the sanity of your own home. For you S.I. junkies, the home video version comes with 112 different variations—with everything from speeded up bombs, zig-zagging bombs to (get this!) *invisible* invaders. A must for any true maven.

SPACE INVADERS

(Bally, \$26.95): Much the same as the above, only Bally's version of *Space Invaders* is not nearly as colorful.

SPACE WAR

(Atari, \$21.95): Beginning to feel lost in space? Well, hang on. We will be getting back to terra firma soon. But meanwhile, many light-years away, we find Atari's second string

space game, *Space War*. This cartridge gives you a choice of three games with 17 different variations between them. *Space Combat* pits your starship against an alien craft, one or both of which may run out of fuel and/or missiles at any time.

Starbase is a race to see which of the two opposing players reaches a



SPACE INVADERS* Game Program™

*Trademark of Taito America Corp.
Trademark of ATARI, INC.

stockpile of fuel and ammunition first. And *Space Shuttle* is a race against time as you try to dock ten times with a spaceship in a given period, all the while dodging deep-space hazards at lightspeed.

SPLIT SECOND

(Parker Brothers, hand-held, \$47.00): This is five—count 'em, five—electronic games in one hand-held unit. As the name implies, *Split Second* is a fast-paced game that requires quick reflexes and instantaneous decisions. *Mad Maze*, *Autocross*,

Speedball, *Space Attack* and *Stomp* are what you get.

Mad Maze serves as a good example of what you can expect: as soon as you have succeeded in maneuvering your "ball" through the computer generated maze, a second maze appears, followed by another and another and . . . well, another. A "preview" option allows you to view the maze for a moment before you start moving your "ball" while relying solely on your memory to get around. Not recommended for the easily frustrated.

STAR BATTLE

(Bally, \$23.95): I'm beginning to wonder what all these alien invaders have against us poor Earthfolk. No matter—at least not as long as it gives us the opportunity to play all these great outer space home video games with all the wonderful explosions and silly sound effects. (Any ninny knows sound does not carry through a vacuum, but, thanks to science fiction films and video games, we are rapidly developing a generation of sub-ninnies who think otherwise).

SUB CHASE

(Mattel, hand-held, \$27.50): Hey, kids, this one has got sonar. You control a destroyer on the water's surface while a computer-controlled submarine tries to sink you from below. Beeps from your "sonar" help keep you clear of the sub and depth-charges enable you to get the sub before it gets you.



SPLIT SECOND™ is a new electronic diversion from Parker Brothers with five exciting games in one. Each game takes a race-against-time theme that will satisfy the most demanding of electronic games buffs.



WILDFIRE, Parker Brothers' electronic pinball game, packs full-scale pinball action into a hand-held unit.



Members of Sonoma State University's (Calif.) Space Invaders* Club Work out on Atari's Video Computer System home video game in preparation for the First Atari Space Invaders/Breakout National Championships this Fall. The phenomenal Space Invaders craze has inspired songs, T-shirts, and clubs such as this one which ranks its members according to points scored in the game. (Players, left to right: Butch Hoover, Sue Strader, Dave Smeds, Karen Escalera, George Lewis.) *Trademark of Taito America Corporation.

SUPERMAN

(Atari, \$29.95): Fly through the air with the greatest of ease, put the bad guys behind bars, save Lois Lane from fates worse than death—all without ever leaving the safety of your humble home. In what is possibly the most imaginative and fun-filled game currently on the home video market, you get to take control of Superman himself.

The object of the game is to guide the Man of Steel through the skies of Metropolis in search of Lex Luthor, his five henchmen and three pieces of a bridge that have to be reassembled across a river. Anxiety is added to *Superman* in the form of a timer that calmly ticks off the long minutes it takes the new player to accomplish these Herculean feats.

SURROUND

(Atari, \$21.95): Another home video game that receives fave raves is Atari's *Surround*. All it is really is two lines, each controlled by opposing players, which you move around the screen leaving a trail behind you

which you hope will surround and block off your opponent.

Doesn't sound like much you say? Well, throw in such extra added attractions as disappearing lines, speeded up action, diagonal movement and the ability to move off the screen entirely and you are talking *difficult*. *Surround* offers a dozen variations on the theme, as well as a pair of selections that allows you to write and draw on your television screen. Where's *Winky Dink* when we really need him?

TENNIS

(Mattel, \$29.95): The best thing about Mattel's *Tennis* cartridge is the cute little boy-blip that rushes out into the playing field to retrieve stray balls. A crowd of faces follows the play action and even lets out cheers for a lob well done. Serves, backhands, forehands—you name it and *Tennis* lets you do it. And all without developing tennis-elbow.

3-D TIC-TAC-TOE

(Atari, \$21.95): You see, it's like regular tic-tac-toe, only it's *different*.

Rather than lining your X's or O's in a row on a flat, one-dimensional plane, *3-D Tic-Tac-Toe* forces you to line up your marks across *three* planes, either vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. Actually, it is not as complicated as it sounds, although it does require a bit more concentration than the traditional game of tic-tac-toe.

WILDFIRE

(Parker Brothers, hand-held, \$50.00): *Wildfire* is yet another winner in the hand-held electronic game category. It is an electronic pinball game that features many of the options found in regular pinball, such as lighted bumpers, sound effects, roll-over lanes, a kick-out hole, electronic ball-blips, a tilt signal, a variable speed selector for three skill levels and digital scoring for up to four players at a time. All in all, not a bad game—except there's no room on it to put down your beer. ■

Next issue: More on home video and hand-held games.

BEYOND CABLE:

THE BACKYARD EARTH STATION

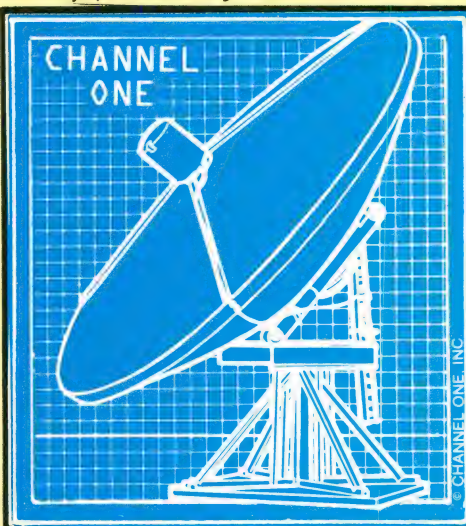
ARTICLE by T.B. Martin

AS A CHILD I WOULD STAND in my backyard observing with a sense of wonder the ECHO balloons, the precursors of communications satellites. They appeared to be moving stars as they traversed south to north above the western horizon. I was told they were being used to test the feasibility of bouncing radio signals over large areas. It was only a few years later, I remember, that the first nationally broadcast video images from Europe to the United States were watched in awe by my elders. About this same time, the Soviet Union put several satellites in orbit to start the world's first video satellite system.

Now, just about a score of years since these developments, I stand once again in my backyard, this time contemplating the purchase of a large parabolic dish through which I could receive in a year's time nearly 500 baseball games, at least 14,000 movies, over 6,000 hours of children's programming, and all the proceedings from the floor of the House of Representatives that I could stomach.

Hovering 22,300 miles above the planet are "geostationary" satellites—"birds"—each with 24 "transponders," which are transmitting and receiving circuits each capable of carrying either a television channel or hundreds of telephone conversations. It is the former which we will be discussing here, in particular RCA's Satcom F1, the satellite which is presently the main supplier of video fare among the dozen or so birds servicing this part of the globe.

The main function of these telecommunications satellites is *not* to bring individuals free direct space-to-earth video images. Indeed, there are those who would make this "eavesdropping" illegal because the satellites are primarily to link the commercial networks and the Public Broadcasting System with their affiliates and to provide cable systems with paid programming for their subscribers. Some of the legal ins and outs of private satellite signal recep-



tion are discussed later on.

Satcom F1 is located 135° over the equator above the Galapagos Islands. F1 and many of the other birds are in the same general Pacific vicinity. Because of this, ground receivers—"earth stations"—require an uncluttered southern exposure to be functional. Due to the relatively weak signals broadcast via microwave from the satellites, direct line of sight between the satellite and receiver is necessary. That is, the receiver must

be in the satellite's "footprints" and not have even a small tree or building blocking this line. Geographic location dictates the necessary size of the dish to ensure clear reception. The quality of the reception, by the way, is usually crisp and clear and generally superior to that received through cable.

Currently, dish sizes range from 11 to 18 feet in diameter and weigh a ton or more.

If you live in the proper area, if you are willing to chainsaw any offending weeping willows, if your local zoning laws permit, if you have at least one acre of land, if no overland microwave links are in your vicinity, and—here's the painful part—if you are willing to shell out between \$11,000 and \$36,000, you can have your very own earth station from one of several enterprises now selling them to the public.

Essentially there are two reasons why you might want to own an earth station: (1) you are well-heeled and require an expensive toy for your gratification and/or (2) you live in an area not serviced by cable or pay television.

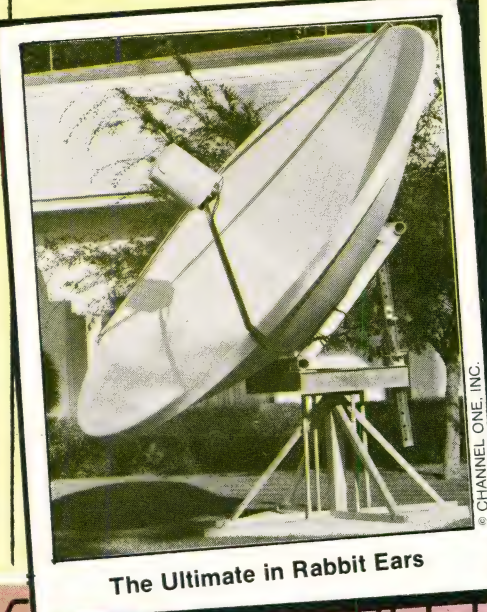
Let's pretend you meet all the above criteria and that you are one of the 4,000 or so who currently own an earth station. What, other than the previously mentioned thousands of hours of movies and children's video, would you get? Tuning into the transponders of F1 you'd receive:

- ★ the entire programming of four "superstations" (KTVU/Oakland, WGN/Chicago, WTBS/Atlanta, and WOR/New York)

- ★ three religious networks (PTL, Christian Broadcasting Network, and Trinity Broadcasting Network)

- ★ three "movies only" channels (The Movie Channel, Calliope, and Home Theater Network)

- ★ six channels devoted to entertainment specials, sports, and movies (Home Box Office East, Home Box Office West, Cinemax, Showtime East, Showtime West, and Showtime Plus Sports)



* MOVIE ONLY CHANNELS * RELIGIOUS NETWORKS *



Fred Hopengarten, President of Channel One stands next to one of his earth station dish antennas.

- ★ two sports networks (The Entertainment and Sports Programming Network as well as Madison Square Garden's channel)
- ★ two ethnic feeds (Black Entertainment Television and the Spanish language Galavision)
- ★ C-Span, the House of Representatives' channel
- ★ the educationally-oriented Appalachian Communication Service
- ★ two eclectic stations that show everything between *I Love Lucy* and R-rated movies (the Satellite Program Network and the Modern Satellite Network)
- ★ Ted Turner's all-news Cable News Network

If access to this panoply of programming does not whet even the

most jaded video appetite then perhaps the ability to expand this list by pointing your dish at another satellite will. If you have one of the more expensive (\$36,000 plus) motorized stations, a press of a button will enable you to receive, for example, Canadian programming, feeds of news reports and entertainment (like *The Tonight Show*) prior to editing and hours—sometimes days—before official broadcast, and pre-feeds of most Public Broadcasting System programming.

Enough? Not quite. If you are truly committed to video—and truly wealthy—you could get the necessary tracking and conversion equipment to receive Soviet TV. Of course, once again, you'd have to live in the right footprints and have a stomach

for lots of tractors and the joys of socialism. While the Soviets were the first to launch satellites for domestic television reception and link its ten time zones, their birds are not geostationary. That is they move within wide arcs and require constant tracking—movement of the dish—for constant reception.

Our satellites, on the other hand, are geostationary: they "park" in figure-8 orbits within radii of 70 miles and remain in about the same area of the sky while moving along at the same speed as the planet's rotation. On-board fuel allows flight engineers to adjust any deviations in orbit.

At this point in time depletion of on-board fuel is the major factor affecting satellite longevity. Until the Space Shuttle becomes a functional reality—when it will be able to launch new satellites into orbit as well as service existing ones—satellites currently face a future of only about ten or 12 years. Also, technological dysfunctions within the birds cannot be righted at this time. In fact, two of F1's transponders are on the blink and there's nothing anyone can do about it. But that still leaves 22 healthy channels.

The main exponent of the right of individuals to enjoy nearly unrestrained video reception is Fred Hopengarten, president of Channel One, Inc., the first business to market home satellite receivers. Fred, an affable man in his early 30's is a lawyer and one-time law clerk to former Federal Communications Commission Chairman Myles Fitzpatrick. Hopengarten markets his home receivers—"Earth Links"—for between \$13,500 and \$16,500, exclusive of the several hundred dollar fee for feasibility and installation research. If you want Channel One to install the station for you, expect to add a couple grand on to the price.

As mentioned previously, this is not an inexpensive proposition.

Due to some recent technological innovations these prices represent a substantial drop in what Channel One originally charged, which was between \$15,500 and \$18,500. The upper end of the price scale represents the need for the large five meter diameter dish for those areas of North America—the two coasts and the southern tier—on the periphery of the satellites' footprints. The smaller model, ideal for the heartland, is three meters in diameter.

Hopengarten has been selling his products at a brisk three to six per month, particularly to people in remote rural areas of the country who

(Continued on Page 73)

A FIRST VIEW OF WHAT'S NEW

VIDEO TAPES

***To Be Or Not To Be* (1942), Produced and Directed by Ernest Lubitsch. 99 minutes. Distributed by Time-Life Video, \$49.95 retail.**

The question that many of you might be asking at this point is why a movie that was produced at the start of World War II and released in 1942—a movie that most people have never even heard of—is being reviewed in 1980 in the pages of a video magazine?

Well, for one thing, *To Be Or Not To Be* has just been released on video-cassette by Time-Life Video. For another, it is a brilliant and important piece of cinematic history that has been largely and inexplicably ignored by everyone save the more ardent film buffs for nearly 40 years. If that were not reason enough, *To Be Or Not To Be* is one hell of a fun movie. After all, where else can you see the late, great Jack Benny play the title role in *Hamlet*?

But all that aside, *To Be* is a film worth reviewing virtually anywhere if for no other reason than the man who directed it, Ernest Lubitsch. To put it as simply as possible, Lubitsch was a genius. He began his career as an actor in his native Germany and switched to directing in 1914. His films were popular throughout Europe and America, which prompted his move here in 1922 to direct Mary Pickford in *Rosita*. The rest, as they say, is history.

Lubitsch's first "masterpiece" came in 1924 with a scathing expose of Hollywood's false glamour, *Forbidden Paradise*. *The Love Parade* (1929) was one of tinsel town's first musicals, and Lubitsch's handling of this new form of cinema quickly became the model for all future films of the genre. He followed that with *Trouble In Paradise* (1932), *Ninotchka* (1939)—which was, incidently, Greta Garbo's first comedy role—and the original and, in this reviewer's opinion, superior version of *Heaven Can Wait* (1943).

Every one of Lubitsch's films are worthy of discussion, but we are, alas, restricted here to *To Be*. Thank-

fully, there is plenty to say about that—all of it good.

To Be Or Not To Be stars Jack Benny and Carole Lombard as a husband and wife acting team in pre-Blitzkrieg Poland. All is well for the duo and their company until September of 1939 when the Nazis invade, thereby causing the cancellation of their planned anti-Nazi play and the closing of their theater. From that point on, the film becomes a non-stop escapade of twists and turns, assumed identities and hilarious fun.

Jack Benny is cast in what is perhaps the most memorable forgot-

All of Lubitsch's films are worthy of discussion, but we are, alas, restricted here to To Be Or Not To Be. Thankfully there is plenty to say about that—all of it good.

ten performance of anyone's career as the vainglorious Joseph Tura. In the course of this film, Benny spends a lot of time switching identities, becoming a reluctant member of the Polish underground resistance force. In the course of events, Benny masquerades as a treacherous Polish professor, a Nazi officer and Hitler's military aide de camp, doing all superbly.

But the best bit in the film has to be the several brief glimpses of Benny in the role of Hamlet on the stage. I am sure this bit of casting was not what Shakespeare had in mind when he wrote the part, but I am equally certain that the Bard would not have minded this gentle bit of spoofery in the least.

Equally as good in their respective roles are Carole Lombard and Robert Stack. Yes, Robert Stack. Of course, *To Be* was done long before he forgot how to act in such television shows as *The Untouchables* and *Name of the Game*. And backing up the stars of this film is a wonderful cast of characters, including Felix Bressart, Lionel Atwill, Sig Ruman, Hilmut Dantine and Stanley Ridges. One could not ask for a better group.

Nor could one hope for a better film, especially when you realize that *To Be Or Not To Be* is, at the heart of it, an anti-Nazi propaganda movie. The movie goer of the early and mid 1940's was, naturally, virtually under siege by such films, but none were as smooth, as graceful, as skillfully produced as *To Be*. Had Hitler had a director such as Lubitsch at his disposal, he undoubtedly would have been able to take Poland and France without firing a shot. Fortunately, we had Lubitsch on our side.

As for the direction itself, Ernest Lubitsch's work is nothing short of brilliant. The action is non-stop, the plot so full of unexpected twists that it demands a genius to pull it all together. Yet not once does Lubitsch's crisp, clean direction detract from what is going on on the screen. And that is the mark of a refulgent director: he must be able to handle the most complex of actions without the direction becoming the star of the film. It is perhaps the greatest of understatements to say Lubitsch does this with style.

So why is *To Be Or Not To Be* an almost forgotten film? Nobody seems to know, but to say that its subject matter dates it and makes it irrelevant for post-World War II audiences is absurd. After all, just because the Roman empire fell a couple thousand years ago does not make *Julius Caesar* passe. It is surprising that a film of *To Be's* brilliance has been ignored—save, of course, by the aforementioned film buffs who make it a point to include this movie in festivals all around the world—a mere 40 years after its

release.

So, if the abundance of superlatives present in this review bothers you to the point of skepticism, don't take my word for it. Get a hold of *To Be Or Not To Be* and see for yourself. I am sure that once you do, you will be able to think of several dozen for yourself.

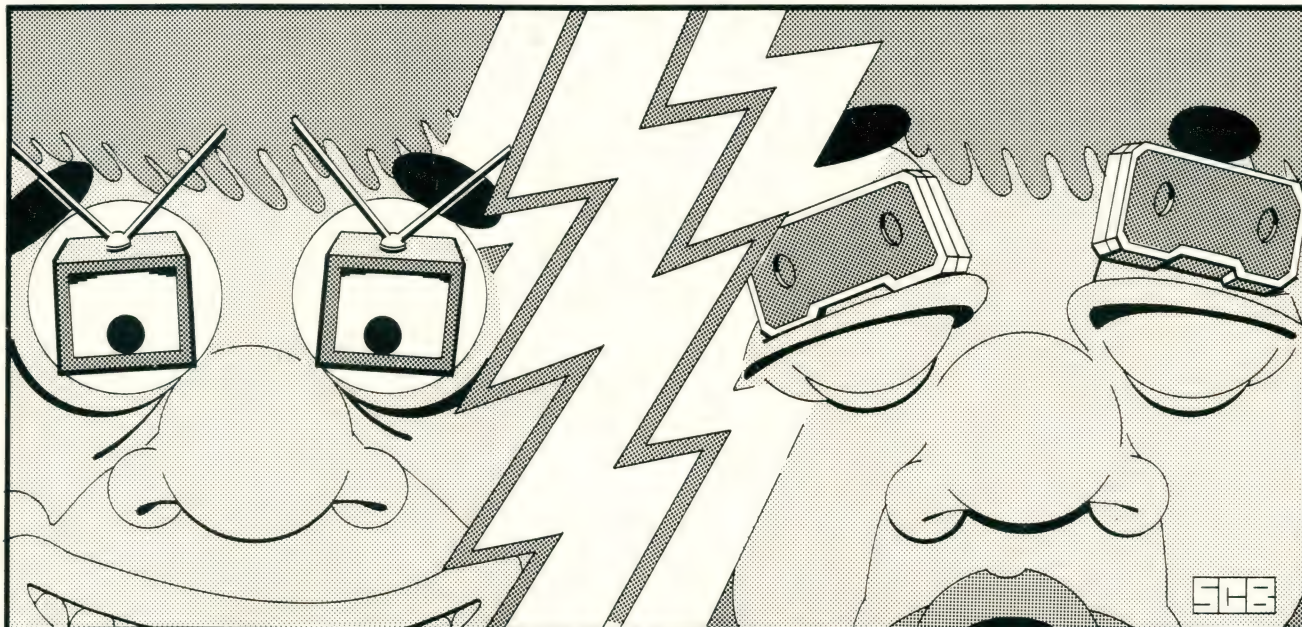
—Paul Kupperberg

is a wonderfully scary movie—the trailer is decidedly silly. *The First Nudie Musical* is a rather charming satire of the X-rated flicks, yet the trailer makes the movie seem like it was produced on a \$1.98 budget.

When it comes right down to it, the first hour of *Select Programs Preview Cassette #1* is downright boring. The accompanying brochure

Warner Brothers' *Merrie Melodies* are on this tape: Jones' "Daffy Duck and the Dinosaur" and the non-series "Prest-O Chang-O." There are also two Felix the Cat cartoons: "The Goose That Laid The Golden Egg" and "Bold King Cole."

But the hit of the tape—the one cartoon that, for the aficionado, is worth the \$24.95 alone—is an unus-



Select Programs Preview Cassette #1, from American General Video, 15720 Ventura Blvd., Encino, CA \$24.95.

The new era of home video has brought us a new method of marketing. Pioneered by the Time-Life Video Club, all a home video merchandiser has to do to get video cassette owners to look at his wares is to produce a lengthy commercial, dub it onto video tape, and sell that tape to the public. After viewing the commercial, the VCR owner then can record something over the sales pitch.

This stunt only is effective if the price of the cassette is lower than the retail price of blank tape. The people out at American General Video missed out on that bit—for \$24.95, the commercials had better sound promising.

Select Programs Preview Cassette #1 contains trailers of the 24 movies in their initial catalog. Many of these movies are quite good—*A Boy and His Dog*, *Halloween*, and the *Cream's Farewell Concert* immediately come to mind as movies I saw and would not mind owning.

Unfortunately, the trailers for these and the other movies are truly rotten. *The Night of the Living Dead*

did a better job of selling to me.

But that second hour—the cartoons that "round out" the cassette—is another matter entirely.

Whomever programmed the eight cartoons that make up the final hour surely escaped from the Home For the Terminally Esoteric. Directors like Chuck Jones, Dave Fleisher and U.B. Iwerks are represented here in some of their better but less known efforts.

The work of Dave Fleisher, directing for his brother Max's company (where they produced the 1930's and early 1940's *Betty Boop*, *Popeye* and *Superman* cartoons), is showcased with two macabre morality lessons set to music—complete with dancing uvulas. "Small Fry" and "The Song of The Birds" are guaranteed to scare the poop out of any potentially wayward youth: the cessation of production of these types of cartoons doubtlessly was the leading factor in the rise of juvenile delinquency since World War II.

U.B. Iwerks, who actually animated the first Mickey Mouse cartoons and is at least as responsible for their success as was Walt Disney, shows up here with an independent effort, "The Pincushion Man," an actioner about a race of balloon people who fight off a horde of meanies. Two

Whomever programmed the eight cartoons that make up the final hour of Select Programs Preview Cassette #1 surely escaped from the Home For the Terminally Esoteric.

ual ditty produced by Borden's Milk and directed by Ted Eshbaugh entitled "The Sunshine Makers."

This cartoon is a masterpiece of both animation and marketing propaganda. The story: there is this race of evil black people (not black as in Negro, but black as in Dracula's wardrobe) who are real grouchy, live in the dark, and plot to destroy all light.

That would inconvenience the happy little white people (you get the idea) who love to frolic in the sun. After engaging the bad guys in battle cosmic, the happy little white

people force-feed milk to the evil black people. And they all live happily ever after. Hey, that beats the shit out of Elsie, doesn't it?

Such a line-up of cartoons might not please everyone, but they sure pleased me: this in spite of occasionally wobbly telecine work. Word has it AGV is planning on producing more such *Select Programs Preview* Cassettes, each geared to a different theme (science-fiction movies, rock tapes, and so on). That's fine by me, as long as they keep the person who picks the cartoons.

—Alex Josephs

GIZMOS

Rhoades Teledapter Model TE-100, Rhoades Electronics. \$19.95 retail.

Now that you have got your video cassette recorder wired in to your remote-controlled 19" color television, and your cable television system or your superterrific television antenna is wired up to your VCR, all you have to do is sit back in your easy chair and enjoy the wonderment of total video.

Except there's still something wrong—something you cannot do very much about. The sound—the audio component of your video environment—stinks.

The fact of the matter is, television

There are a lot of devices on the market which claim to deliver better sound, and given the tinker-toy speakers found in most television sets, most of these devices make good on that promise. But they tend to cost a lot of money—anywhere from \$50.00 to over \$200.00

These devices are not needed. No doubt they are very good—the electronics are innovative and capable of reproducing brilliant tones. Unfortunately, the television stations are still broadcasting slightly refined audio sludge, so there is no sense getting all that hot and bothered about the state of the art.

No, there are two ways you can get the best possible sound without dumping a lot of money—if you have a television set that has an earphone jack and if you have a stereo amplifier (that thing over there into which you plug your radio, record player and/or tape deck) with an unused auxiliary or tape input.

The first way costs about five or ten dollars and takes a bit of electronics or sound engineering. You do not have to open up your television set or stereo amplifier.

Notice how that earphone jack accepts a small pin-type plug, and how your stereo amplifier accepts two "RCA" type plugs. The trick is to come up with patch-cord adapters that will begin with a small pin plug (called mini phone plug) and end with two "RCA" type plugs. It is

has problems setting up your VCR or stereo system, you can buy a ready-made patching system.

The *Rhoades Teledapter Model TE-100* retails at \$19.95, which is about ten dollars more than the do-it-yourself version. It begins with the mini phone plug you attach to your TV earphone jack, and ends with two RCA-type plugs you stick into your stereo amplifier. It has a small metal box in the middle which helps equalize the sound—in fact, this set-up will result in slightly better sound than the do-it-yourself version.

The TE-100 also comes with easy instructions and a telephone number you can call if you still cannot figure it out.

The Rhoades TE-100 has one other advantage over the home-made version: it has instructions on how to wire it directly to your television set, should you not have an earphone jack.

Beware of spending more money than you have to: many electronics companies and television stores have expensive patch-cord systems on sale that are nothing more than that which you can buy from any Radio Shack (et al.) for around ten dollars. And, as noted, there are more expensive television sound amplifiers and systems—including at least one other marketed under the name "Rhoades Teledapter." Remember—the model TE-100 retails for \$19.95

The Rhoades Teledapter comes with a small metal box which helps equalize the sound—in fact this set-up will result in slightly better sound than a do-it-yourself version.

sound is rotten. And until the Federal Communications Commission gets its act together and authorizes one simple and inexpensive television stereo system, the sound is not going to get much better.

But you can get as much of that rotten sound into your living room as possible, and the easiest way to improve your audio is by circumventing your television speaker.

If you look at the speaker in your TV set, you will note it is not much bigger than those found in your typical \$5.95 transistor radio—possibly three inches in diameter maximum. No wonder the audio portion of that \$69.95 pre-recorded video cassette sounds like it was lifted from a transcription disc of *Don McNeill's Breakfast Club*.

simple, really, and you can do it in two steps: buy a cord that begins with a mini phone plug and ends in one RCA-type plug, and connect it to a "Y" adapter that will accept the RCA plug and end with two more just like it.

Stick the two RCA plugs into your amplifier, stick the mini phone plug into your television earphone jack, turn on the amplifier and set it to "auxiliary" or "tape monitor" and adjust the television set sound down real low (so you do not blow out your speakers) and then turn it up to the degree of loudness you desire.

Simple—if you are the type of person who can wire a VCR to your television set after one or two readings of the owner's manual.

If you are the type of person who

(the Time-Life Video Club sells it for about five dollars less) and it is all you will need.

Until the FCC gets its act together. Which could be forever.

—Alex Josephs

BOOKS

***The Tonight Show*, by Robert Metz. 290 pages, plus eight pages of photos. Published by Playboy Press, \$11.95.**

First, some background. Robert Metz is a former columnist for the *New York Times* and is the



The Tonight Show is not an important book—at times it is not even a good book, having a tendency to wallow in puffery and self-indulgence.

author of several books, including the first-rate critical history of the Tiffany Network, *CBS: Reflections In A Bloodshot Eye*. Since penning the CBS tome, Metz has written a less-indepth look at *The Today Show*.

The Tonight Show is meant to be a companion volume to his previous work, and the choice is as important as it is obvious. Both *Today* and *Tonight* are winners of the television longevity sweepstakes; both are capable of swaying public opinion, selling books and unleashing celebrities. Both are important television shows that fulfill in their own individual ways the promise of television.

Metz's *The Today Show* is a good book, an important book. It leans a bit more to *National Enquirer* style journalism than does the CBS book, but it does a lot to explain the success and the impact of that early morning bench mark of broadcasting.

Metz's *The Tonight Show* is not an important book—at times it is not even a good book. If *Today Show* has a tendency to lean towards puffery and self-indulgence, *Tonight Show* wallows in it.

The author begins with a *glitzy* behind-the-scenes look at the opening of the Carson program; a good hook to tease the bookstore browser. He goes on to outline a history of the comedian, and in the process becomes the only man in history with the pretentiousness to use Lenny Bruce, Till Eulenspiegel and Don Rickles in the same paragraph. As Johnny Carson has noted time and time again, you can not

explain comedy.

From there we are reintroduced to *Today/Tonight* creator Pat Weaver, a true video genius whom Metz profiled in *The Today Show*. He did it better the first time.

The writer goes on to spend all of 14 pages on the start-up attempt: the massive and unsuccessful *Broadway Open House*. In the process, Metz uncovers two interesting bits of trivia: Jan Murray was first offered the hosting gig but his agent talked him out of it, and the first man who was signed as host, one Creesh Hornsby, died a few days before the premiere. The program went on with—you guessed it—an endless succession of guest hosts.

The Tonight show book falls apart when it gets to the section outlining Steve Allen's days. It seems the author has something against Mr. Allen. Metz trivializes *Meeting Of The Minds*, Steve Allen's innovative and award-winning series of mock talk shows with different historical figures populating the panel. He argues endlessly that Allen threw away his television career the day he quit *Tonight*, ignoring the fact that Allen went on to a four-year prime-time network run with his variety show. By way of comparison, Jack Paar's post-*Tonight* prime-time run lasted three years.

Ernie Kovacs, the man who landed the permanent guest host spot on Monday and Tuesday nights towards the end of the Allen days, hardly received better treatment, but Kovacs' tenure as a *Tonight* host was brief and hardly deserves more indepth treatment.

Jack Paar emerges as the real star of *The Tonight Show* book, and justifiably so. Johnny Carson—who is hardly ignored in this book—has received a great deal of exposure lately, with major interviews in *Rolling Stone* and on *60 Minutes* in recent years. Paar more-or-less has faded from the public memory—reflecting his own desire—and Metz does a service by casting light on this enigmatic entertainer.

Carson receive the bulk of the ink, and that, too, is justified. After all, Johnny Carson has held the fort almost twice as long as Allen and Paar combined. Metz covers the Prince's career in a perfunctory manner, held back by the fact that neither Carson nor anybody presently working for him would deign to speak with the writer.

The Tonight Show is not a bad book, not by any means. It is interesting and is at least as insightful as it is picayunish. It is as good as Terry Galanoy's 1972 attempt, *Tonight!*

There are a few connections Metz lays out without joining them. The guest host is an integral part of the history of *The Tonight Show*. Carson's four one-hour-a-day work week is longer than Allen's three one-hour shows per week schedule. Indeed, Carson started out with a 105-minute nightly broadcast, shedding the first 15 minutes during one of his mid-contract renegotiation sessions (Metz misses this one).

The Tonight Show is an important show, and the author does a credible job of keeping up with a complicated story. A good job—not

a great job.

After CBS and *Today Show*, I am certainly looking forward to his next time at bat.

—Mike Gold

The Great TV Sitcom Book, by Rick Mitz. 440 pages. Published by Marek Publishers. \$19.95.

For the uninitiated among you, it would help to know that a sitcom is not the latest in communications satellites currently ringing the planet but one of the earliest and greatest of many great

healthy run as one of radio's most popular forms. Sitcoms, along with the radio variety/comedy and game shows made the transfer from their radio origins quite easily and, 33 years later, show no sign of leaving the airwaves.

According to author Rick Mitz, there are seven kinds of sitcoms and it might be helpful to go into them here. Leading off the list is the Domestic sitcom (such as *Father Knows Best*, *Donna Reed*, *All in the Family*), followed by Kiddie (*Dobie Gillis*, *Happy Days*, *Leave it to Beaver*), Couples (*I Love Lucy*, *Burns and Allen*, *Pete and Gladys*), Science Fiction (*Bewitched*, *I Dream of Jeanie*, *Mork and Mindy*), Corn (*The*

McHale's Navy).

Naturally, there is some amount of spill-over between these different sub-genres—the *Dick Van Dyke Show* certainly was concerned with the career of young comedy writer Rob Petrie, but many of the episodes can easily be fit into the "Couples" category.

Each of the above mentioned shows, along with many, many others far too numerous to list in a single review (after all, Mitz took 440 pages to do it) are reviewed in *The Great TV Sitcom Book* at length and in chronological order, starting with the 1949 television season and continuing through to 1979.

All of our favorite—and many not so favorite—shows are reviewed at length and in chronological order in The Great TV Sitcom Book.

television institutions—the situation comedy.

In fact, the sitcom is as old as television broadcasting itself, having begun in 1947 after a long and

Beverly Hillbillies, *Andy Griffith*, *Real McCoys*), *Ethnic* (*Sanford and Son*, *Chico and the Man*, *Amos 'N Andy*) and *Career* (*The Dick Van Dyke Show*, *Our Miss Brooks*, *Bilk*).

Mitz divides each year's sitcoms by giving an in-depth history and analysis of what he considers the "front-runners" of the season. In 1949, for example, such popular programs as *The Goldbergs* and *Mama* are granted winner status, while less memorable shows like *Apartment 3-C*, *The Hartmans* and *The Pinky Lee Show* are considered "also-rans"—or, even, never-should-have-rans.

It is obvious that a tremendous amount of research went into *The Great TV Sitcoms*, especially in Mitz's dissection of the front-running programs. While there have been entire books written on *I Love Lucy* and *The Honeymooners* alone—and those shows certainly are given ample coverage here—there has been little written on such sitcom classics as *Make Room For Daddy*, *My Three Sons*, *Get Smart* and *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. Mitz makes up for this lack here, and he includes many photographs from these shows as well.

Not all sitcoms are gems, of course, as anyone who watches television readily knows. For every good show there are at least five clunkers. All these forgettables are covered by capsule comments in each year's "also ran" section. Mitz has made sure that, much as we may want to, we will never forget such sitcoms as *It's About Time*, *The Ugliest Girl In Town*, *Me and the Chimp* and, everybody's favorite, *My Mother the Car*. (Quick—how many know the words to the theme song of that

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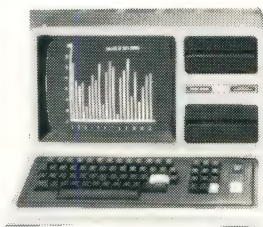
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one?) In fact, there were several television seasons in which Mitz finds it impossible to separate the "front runners" from the "also rans." In such cases, he substitutes a third category; "Whatever Happened To . . . the 1967-68 Season." I have often wondered about that myself.

By Mitz's analysis, the 1960s were the lean years of television sitcoms. From 1965-69, only *Get Smart* makes it into "front runners." The 1970s, though weak on drama and adventure were, according to the author, the true golden age of sitcoms. The 1974-75 season, for instance, has the most winners of any season since 1952, the year of *Ozzie and Harriet*, *I Married Joan*, *Life of Riley*, *Our Miss Brooks* and *Private Secretary*. 1974 brought us *Barney Miller*, *Chico and the Man*, *The Jeffersons* and *Rhoda*.

The Great TV Sitcoms also has some other interesting features, such as a list of the "67 Stock Sitcom Characters." These are the folks like the daffy Barney Fife or Buddy Sorrell sidekick or the testy-but-tender-boss, a la Lou Grant and Lucy's Mr. Mooney. "Good For A Laugh" is Mitz's description of the one-liners that were milked weekly for guffaws. Would you believe that

both Maynard G. Krebs and Lurch the Butler used the same "You rang?" line and both very dissimilar characters made it work week after week, almost ten years apart. Only in sitcomland, folks.

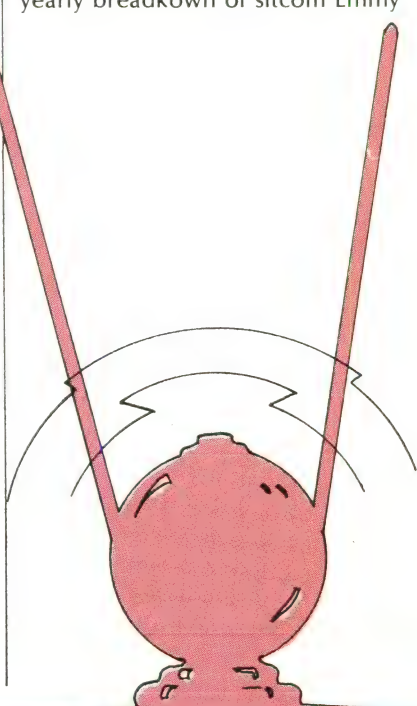
The back of the book contains a yearly breakdown of sitcom Emmy

and rating winners. It is here that we find out that *I Love Lucy* edges out *All in the Family* as the number one rated show of all time, and Archie is tied with Rob Petrie for the most Emmys won for best comedy series. Trivia buffs will not go hungry here.

For everyone who has ever enjoyed sitcoms, *The Great TV Sitcom Book* will rekindle three decades worth of fond memories. The sitcom is probably the most durable format among the weekly series and, unlike the western or spy sagas that have populated the airwaves over the years, will never die. Even in syndication, the one-half-hour format is infinitely more desirable to television station managers, thus insuring that all of our comedy favorites will be available in reruns for years to come.

It is therefore fitting that the first book to study the subject does it with proper justice. From actual excerpts from scripts to complete cast listings, Rick Mitz has done his work well. To those of us who have forgotten how Captain Nice got his powers or what Buddy Overstreet was running from, we will forever be in Mr. Mitz's debt.

—Larry Charet



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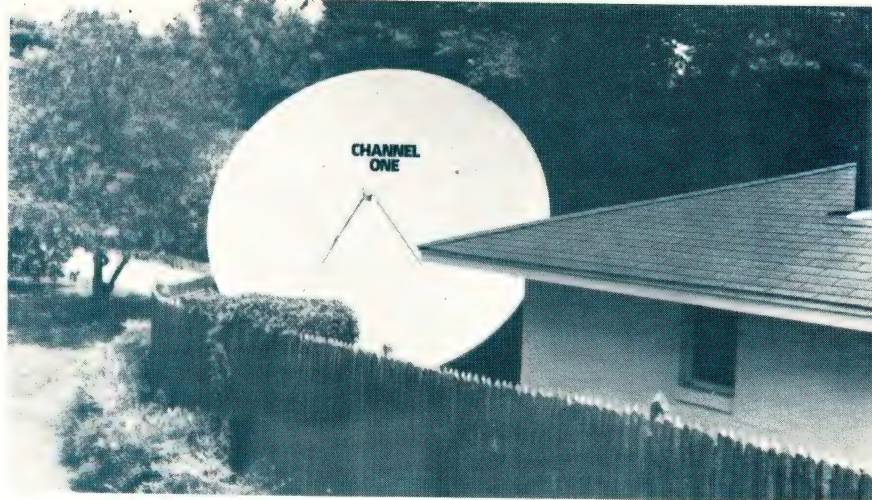
(Continued from Page 65)

are removed from both cable systems and acceptable antenna reception. The cost of the earth station seems more reasonable compared to the potential cost of running a cable even a mile to, for example, a large ranch in the Colorado boondocks. Indeed, cable systems are reluctant to run cable anywhere unless they can be assured of around 50 customers per mile. For some, the earth station is the only solution to weak television reception.

Hopengarten's legal background is fortunate both for his own enterprise and for his customers since one more potential peril to personal video reception from satellite remains. Noise is currently being heard to the effect that picking up a signal normally intended for a subscription system without paying for it may become illegal if some pending legislation becomes law.

For example, a proposed amendment to the Communications Act would make it illegal to receive signals through unauthorized "black boxes"—those devices which receive cable transmissions or decode scrambled pay-tv broadcasts—which are not rented or purchased from the broadcaster of subscription television services. This legislation could also be applied to earth stations owned by private persons.

Regardless of the proposed legislation and ongoing adjudication, Fred Hopengarten cannot see the day when the government would make passive reception illegal. Passive reception refers to "regular" home-oriented viewing wherein the signals go no further than the front door and



For the suburbanite who has everything—a backyard satellite receiver.

are not used in further transmission or publication. This concept was first enunciated in 1934, when the original Communications Act was passed. At the time large numbers of people owned short-wave radio receivers through which they could overhear, for example, ship-to-shore/ship-to-ship transmissions.

Hopengarten notes that scrambled pay-tv signals travel in the 2 GHz range and that signals transmitted from satellites travel in the 4 GHz range. Both types of signals, lawyer Hopengarten vociferously points out, are "common carrier" signals like ship-to-shore or airplane-to-tower radio frequencies. "A radio signal is a radio signal," says Fred, and other than certain bands used for military purposes, are open to legal passive reception.

The only way to find out what a private individual is watching in his home is for the police to come into the house. Even if watching pay-tv for free were declared illegal, even if you had a huge dish in your backyard, you'd have to be watching one of the

particular pay-transmissions—like Home Box Office rather than Public Broadcasting Service—while the cops were there. Hopengarten can not see the government becoming an entertainment gestapo.

Considering the existing statutes, including the Copyright Act of 1976 and its applications to video taping, and FCC directives, Hopengarten concludes, "As long as the airwaves are public, private reception is legal."

It would appear, then, that if unauthorized satellite reception is declared illegal, serious constitutional questions would arise.

In recent months the FCC decided common carrier licensing of earth stations is unnecessary (based, incidentally, on 60 comments from concerned parties, only two of which—the Department of Justice and Fred Hopengarten—agreed with this decision). Since then, location registration is also unnecessary. If restrictive laws or bureaucratic decisions backed by the force of law come down the pike the question remains: who will put the bell on the ferocious cat who receives unauthorized transmissions? Certainly not the FCC if recent history is any indication.

By the end of the 1980s smaller (approximately one meter), lighter, and cheaper earth stations are expected. Several companies in the U.S. and Japan are experimenting with the concept. These smaller dishes will require, however, different satellites than those presently in use. The smaller dishes cannot receive signals from today's birds because they need a much stronger signal due to their smaller size. The first such satellite was recently launched in Japan but unfortunately fell from the sky, putting off the advent of the small dish on the market by a couple years.

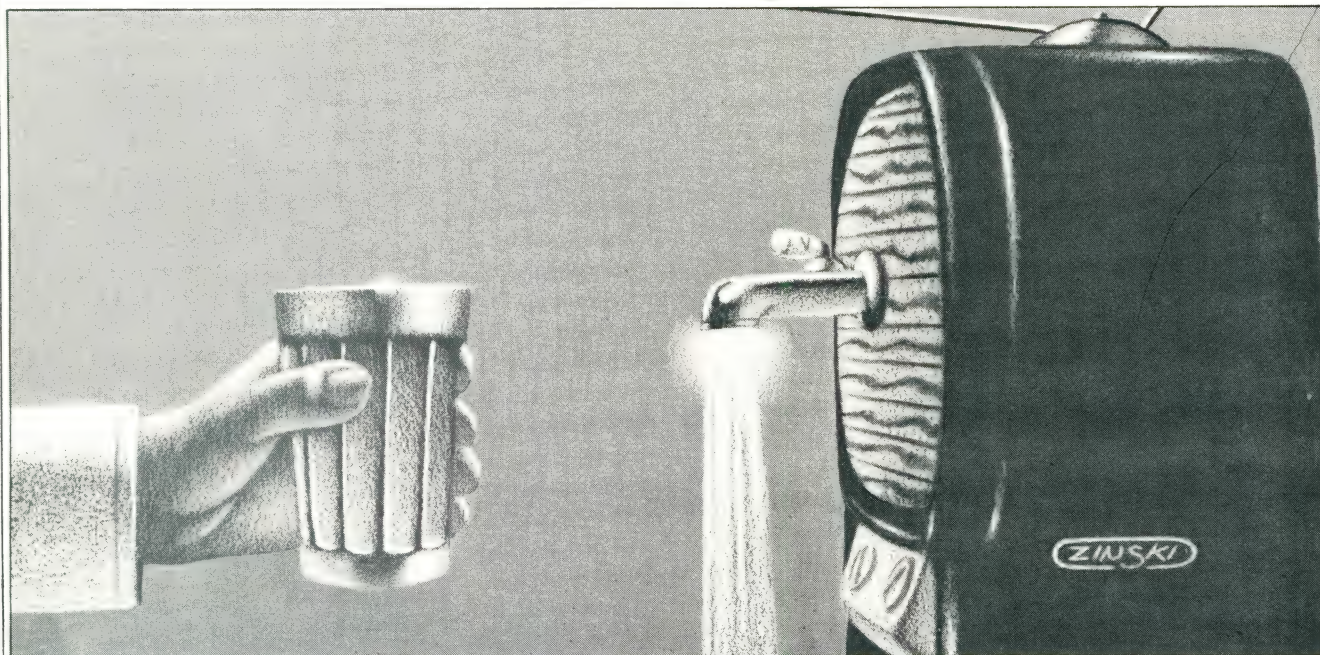
We can expect the home dish to be an integral element of the video future, another technological wonder which will make the global village an even smaller burg...



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Words to live by if you are a vintage video addict. Some of the best shows currently offered for syndication are in black and white, but station managers refuse to buy them for local airing.

The following is a list of once popular 1950's and early 1960's series (the networks went all-color at the start of the September 1966 season) that are in syndication (source: *Series, Serials and Packages*, 1980 edition) but are not in any market that I know of: *77 Sunset Strip*, *Naked City*, *Danger Man* (Patrick McGeehan), *Burke's Law* (Gene Barry), *Hawaiian Eye* (Robert Conrad), *M Squad* (Lee Marvin), *Richard Diamond* (David Janssen), *East Side West Side* (George C. Scott and Cicely Tyson), *The Bob Cummings Show*, and *Tightrope* (Mike Connors). That's a lot of classic television.

It is hard to believe, but all of these television shows are sitting in vaults or warehouses somewhere, gathering dust instead of viewers. Even harder to believe are the reasons that these series are not being aired.

Many station managers believe these shows are dated to the point where 1980's viewers cannot relate to them, obviously ignoring the

success of such shows as *I Love Lucy* and *The Honeymooners*. I believe the age of these shows is the most positive factor here—these classics are so old they are new! After all, if station managers rejected old movies

We are tired of seeing the 53rd rerun of Gilligan's Island and we just might like to see Kookie comb his hair again.

for this same criterion, they would be left with nothing but used car commercials.

Violence in the detective shows is another popular “out” for programmers who snub old black and whites. Of course, this excuse does not hold water: *Starsky and Hutch*, *Rockford Files* and *Prisoner: Cell Block H* are all popular syndication fare, and all are as violent or more violent than the above-mentioned classics.

Most of the popular 1950's black-and-whites have enough episodes that they can be “stripped”—

television industry parlance for running a show Monday through Friday in the same time slot—for months before repeats would set in. Purchasers of syndicated fare want the viewing public to get in the habit of turning on the tube at the same time each day, but they ignore such fantastic packages as *77 Sunset Strip* with its 149 hours, *Hawaiian Eye* with its 134 hours, *Naked City* with its 99 half-hours and *M Squad* with its 117. No reruns here for quite some time.

Nothing matters as much as the quality of the shows themselves. All have been proven ratings-grabbers and can stand the test of time. Station managers have got to realize that we are tired of seeing the 53rd rerun of *Gilligan's Island* and we just might like to see Kookie comb his hair again.

By the way, if there is anybody out there who is getting any of the shows I listed on their local outlet, drop me a line.

Now to your vintage video questions:

Q. Reading about the death of Jim Hutton, I am reminded of the multitude of different versions of Ellery Queen. Just how many were there?

A. There have been five versions of the super detective/author. John Hart portrayed Ellery Queen in 1950 on the old DuMont network, followed by Lee Bowman when the

Illustration by John Zielinski

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series switched to ABC the following year. In 1954, Hugh Marlowe portrayed the character in a syndicated version. NBC took on the character in 1958, first casting George Nader and later Lee Phillips as the ace sleuth.

1971 saw Peter Lawford try his hand at Ellery Queen in a pilot that was run off as part of the NBC Mystery Movie. The last and best remembered Queen was the late Jim Hutton who portrayed the detective on NBC during the 1975-1976 season.

Actors who have played Inspector Queen, Ellery's father, include Florenz Ames, Les Tremayne, Harry Morgan and David Wayne.

Q. Wasn't *The Andy Griffith Show* a spin-off from the old *Danny Thomas Show*?

A. Yes, after a fashion. On February 15, 1960, Danny Williams (Thomas) was arrested by Sheriff Griffith for speeding and refusing to pay his fine. Ronnie Howard also appeared as Opie, and Frances Bavier as Henrietta, which later became the Aunt Bea character. This one-shot appearance led to the October, 1960 start-up of the *Andy Griffith Show*.

One good spin-off deserved another and the May 18, 1964 *Andy Griffith Show* was a pilot for *Gomer Pyle, U.S.M.C.*

Q. Did the great Alfred Hitchcock ever direct any episodes of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*?

A. Yes, the master directed fifteen of them, including the October, 1955 premiere.

1. *Revenge* aired 10-2-55, starring Vera Miles and Ralph Meeker.

2. *Breakdown* aired 11-13-55 and starred Joseph Cotton and Raymond Bailey.

3. *Case of Mr. Pelham* aired 12-4-55 and starred Tom Ewell.

4. *Back for Christmas* aired 3-4-56 and starred John Williams and Isobel Elsom.

5. *Wet Saturday* aired 9-30-56 and starred Sir Cedric Harwicke.

6. *Mr. Blanchard's Secret* aired 12-23-56 and starred Mary Scott and Dayton Lummis.

7. *One More Mile To Go* aired 4-7-57 and starred David Wayne.

8. *The Perfect Crime* aired 10-20-57 and starred Vincent Price and James Gregory.

9. *Lamb To The Slaughter* aired 4-13-58 and starred Barbara Belgeddes and Allan Lane.

10. *A Dip in the Pool* aired 6-1-58 and starred Keenan Wynn and Fay Wray.

11. *Banquo's Chair* aired 5-3-59 and starred Reginald Gardner and John Williams.

12. *Arthur* aired 9-27-59 and starred Laurence Harvey.

13. *The Crystal Trench* aired 10-4-59 and starred James Donald and Patricia Owens.

14. *Bang! You're Dead!* aired 10-17-61 and starred Billy Mumy, Biff Elliott and Steve Dunne.

15. *Saw The Whole Thing* aired 10-11-62 and starred John Forsythe and Kent Smith.

Q. With all the promotion going on for the new *Flash Gordon* movie, I seem to recall a *Flash Gordon* television series that was separate from the old 1930's movie serials. Any confirmation?

A. The *Flash Gordon* television show ran for 39 episodes—one full season back then—and was telecast in syndication during the 1950's. Steve Holland played Flash, Joe Nash was Doctor Zarkov and Irene Champlin portrayed Dale Arden.

The program was produced in Germany and bore little resemblance to either the comic strip version (the original) or any of the three movie serials. These serials still show up in some areas early Saturday or Sunday mornings.

Of course, there was an original cartoon version for the Saturday morning crowd telecast on NBC last year. Whereas it was rather close to the original comic strip version, it was fairly crudely drawn.

TV Obscura

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I Spy: Channel 5, Los Angeles and Channel 7, Washington, DC

The Millionaire: Channel 3, Madison, WI.

We'll see you next month. ■

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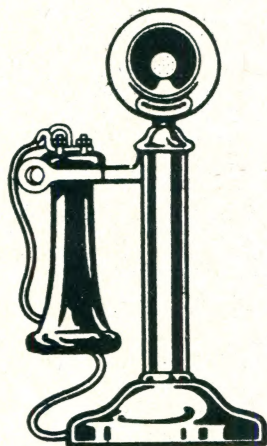
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MUSEUM OF BROADCASTING

(continued from page 55)

to the third floor library. Over 750 books are stored in there all pertaining to some aspect of television or broadcasting. The library also maintains subscriptions to 30 periodicals dealing with the medium.

The computer-generated card catalogue is a delightful wealth of information. Not only is it a complete listing of the programs available for viewing or listening, but each show is summarized and indexed by its title, genre, subject matter, network and the original air date. The programs are also cross-referenced under the names of major stars or important production staff members.

For example, the initial episode of *Star Trek* can be found not only under its own name, but also under the library's Science Fiction section of the card catalogue, and under the separate listing for Producer Gene Rodenberry.

The library room, though not spacious, is also the site of various special exhibitions. In the past, there have been displays of many of the old radio premiums and memorabilia, and an exhibit of famous newscasts of the past. There is also a console with a video tape of Alistair Cooke explaining the purpose of the Museum.

For those searching for and wishing to view an old show, the library is their first stop. Once the program in the card catalogue is located, the special code number is given to the librarian who phones the request to the study center. For a donation of \$1.50 per viewing hour, the patron is then shown to the study center where the tape of his show has been dumbwaitered down from the storage area on the floor above.

The cassette is then placed in the special console for private viewing. Earphones ensure privacy and allow for 26 consoles to be operating simultaneously without interference.

The popularity of the Museum, coupled with its noon-time opening often results in a long waiting period, which can be eliminated by becoming a member and reserving time.

Memberships are opened to the public and run \$20 per year for students and \$30 per year for individuals. Besides the reservation privileges, members also receive a subscription to the Museum's newsletter.

The Museum publishes a subject guide to the entire collection, a ver-

sion of which is published in Braille in conjunction with the Library of Congress Division for the Blind and Physically Handicapped. Chronological date lists of radio and television broadcasts are also available.

The "Open Channels" series is a new function of the Museum of Broadcasting, made possible by a Learning Museum grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities. This series of lectures on broadcasting began in February of 1980 and will run for three years. The courses are given in the evening and are accepted for academic credit in many cases. The fee for each course is \$30.

Some of the recent lecture courses include "Television As A Visual Art" conducted by Barbaraless Diamonstein, Special Projects Editor of *ARTnews*, and "Television: The Child's First Teacher" given by former *New York Times* Education Editor Fred Hechinger and Grace Hechinger, author, educator and columnist.

The Museum of Broadcasting is a cultural wonderland. Like the medium it seeks to preserve, it is a melting pot of the educational, the entertaining, the good, the bad and the mediocre. All types of programming can be absorbed; lectures and features are offered that will expand the individual horizons of the patrons.

The cultural service the Museum provides, the historic archive that it has created and that keeps growing and will be preserved, cannot be praised enough. But the bottom line still has to be seen as one of entertainment. Although television (and the Museum) seeks to attain the cultural recognition it deserves, it still exists because there are viewers who want to be entertained.

A constant observation made in the study centers of the Museum is of the student, papers spread across a console while an important or historic newscast or lecture is being rerun before him. But the student's eyes are not on his own console. He is often seen leaning far back in his chair trying to sneak a glimpse of the *I Love Lucy* episode being played in the console next to his.

And one is gratified that the Museum of Broadcasting is so diverse and open-minded. ■

* * * * *

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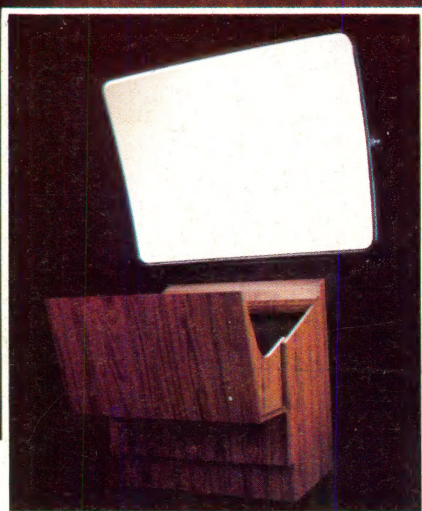
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